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LECTURES,

Expository and Practical,

ON THE

BOOK OF THE PROPHET DANIEL,

WITH COPIOUS NOTES.

FIRST SERIES,

COMPRISING

THE FIRST SIX HISTORICAL CHAPTERS.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

DURING the last few years, the study of the prophetical parts of Holy Scripture has engaged the serious attention of the christian public, both at home and abroad. The devout and reflecting mind seems to have been drawn into this particular train of thought and inquiry from an impression that the times, in which we live, are approximating to those periods, specified in the Bible as important eras; which impression is considerably strengthened by the present state of political affairs, in every quarter of the globe, tending to a crisis, and involving the welfare of the church militant upon earth.

Not only, indeed, does the religious community feel the critical position in which it is placed,

but, as it appears, from what we read and hear, many *thinking* people, though unacquainted with the prophecies, entertain the idea that some great event is coming upon the world, and that it is not far distant from our own age.

The sudden alteration in the intellectual condition of the lower orders of mankind; the rapid and extensive diffusion of knowledge; the extraordinary advances in every branch of science; and the restless spirit, pervading all ranks of society, but especially the working population; teach us that we cannot progress much further without the occurrence of a change, even though we may be unable to determine the nature of the approaching revolution.

The following course of Lectures was delivered to the Wednesday evening congregation of St. Luke's, and is now published for general circulation, with the view of augmenting the interest in prophetic researches, where it already exists, and promoting it in the minds of those, who have not as yet duly appreciated its importance. A distinct and comprehensive knowledge of the signification of predictions, with a clear understanding of the manner in

which they have been fulfilled, and are still fulfilling, is an attainment in scriptural literature, highly valuable, and well worthy of our desire.

Various works on the subject have been presented to the public, many of which may be perused with equal pleasure and profit; but still, it is hoped, that the volume, now issued from the press, will not be regarded as superfluous; since it is designed to lay before the reader, in that plain, unadorned, and easy language, appropriate to discourses from the pulpit, an Exposition of the Book of Daniel. Although much has been written and published upon this portion of Scripture, yet, the Author believes, a series of Lectures, explanatory and practical, on the *entire* Book, has not hitherto appeared; and, if this supposition be correct, the vast majority of religious people, who do not possess expensive commentaries, who have not the command of a theological library, who, perhaps, are not conversant with the history of past ages (an essential requisite for the understanding of prophecy) and whose circumstances will not allow of a remedy for either of these cases, are ne-

cessitated to remain in ignorance of the full import of those solemn and delightful truths, revealed to us through the medium of this highly favoured servant of God.

The following pages, therefore, are intended, not for such as can appeal to more laborious, more critical, and consequently more expensive works; but for those members of the church who, though desirous of being well informed on the topics herein brought forward, are debarred the satisfaction of having their wishes gratified.

The Author hopes to proceed with the remaining chapters of the prophet on the same plan as here pursued, with this only difference, that, because the visions of Daniel are more difficult to elucidate than the mere historical matter that has preceded, the future Lectures will contain a more minute examination of the things set forth.

Before concluding this brief introductory notice, the circumstance that occasioned the production of these Discourses may be mentioned. About twelve months since, whilst busily engaged in preparing for the press an account of the vicious state of the metropolis, obtained, not

from the inquiries of others, but from personal investigations, carried on by visiting the haunts of the profligate, and searching into the mysteries of metropolitan wickedness, the Author was suddenly afflicted with a domestic bereavement, which, having drawn his attention from the above occupation, induced a more particular examination of prophecy than had previously occupied his thoughts. The result of this inquiry was, that his mind became more than ever seriously impressed with a conviction that the end of this dispensation was drawing near, and, in opposition to his former views, that the Saviour would, at his approaching advent, reign with his saints upon the renovated earth. The Book of Daniel unfolded to him these facts. He therefore resolved to proclaim, for the instruction and comfort of others, that view of divine truth, which conveyed such earnest warning, and brought so much consolation to his own mind; and, as it seemed advisable to embrace the subjects of the entire Book, instead of confining the Lectures to any particular predictions, the present plan has been adopted.

It is only necessary to add, that, the First Series being now completed, it is also intended to publish, in two other volumes, the Discourses that have yet to be delivered; the former of which will be ready, if the Lord permits, in the course of the year. The volumes are thus sent forth *separately*, to render the purchase of them more convenient to those parties for whom they are chiefly designed.

The reader is advised not to neglect the perusal of the Notes, as they embody much additional and interesting matter, which could not so well be introduced in the Lectures.

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May, 1840.

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LECTURE I

DANIEL, I. 6, 7.

“Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego.”

IN commencing a course of Lectures upon the entire Book of Daniel, wherein it will be my constant desire to blend practical reflections with the expository matter, it is expedient to offer some introductory notice with respect to prophecy in general, and in regard to our prophet in particular.

As the human species are universally admitted to rank, in the order of creation, among rational

and intelligent beings, so may it be expected that a religion, declaring itself to have proceeded from the Creator, will produce those credentials for its divinity which appeal to the senses, as well as to the feelings, and may be examined and proved by the inquiring mind.* The christian advocate invites the scrutiny of the sceptic; and ever feeling that his cause is that of truth, challenges the adversaries of his faith to an investigation of the evidences upon which it rests. He is in possession of those testimonies which, as an accountable being, intrusted with the powers of discrimination, he might reasonably anticipate would be vouchsafed; and which, when they are consulted with an unbiassed judgment, will assuredly induce conviction. (John vii. 17.) Whilst they baffle the unenviable, but strenuous endeavours that have been made to invalidate them, they certify the reality of his own views, and prove to him that every hope derived from the proffered salvation of Jesus Christ is built upon a foundation which, like an immovable rock, remains steadfast amidst the elements of a tempestuous world.

The main evidence for the truth of Christianity is drawn from the performance of miracles, and the fulfilment of prophecy. Not that these alone comprise the testimony you can

* See Note A.

adduce, when called upon to give “a reason of the hope that is in you,” but they form the chief of those *external* proofs we propose to the consideration of our opponents. At the establishment of religion in the world, the former carried with them more weight than the latter. It is the nature of prophecy, not *necessarily*, but because so ordained, to be obscure,* until the accomplishment of the predicted event, whether partial or complete, shall afford an interpretation. Consequently, the extraordinary powers delegated to Moses were better suited to convince his people of the interposition of the Almighty in their favour, than any reference he could have made to those prophetic promises delivered to Abraham. For instance, when the Israelites perceived the waters of the Red Sea divide, and form a safe passage for their transmigration, at the bidding of their leader, they would discover herein an irrefragable proof that they were under the guidance of the Omnipotent; whereas, an appeal to the words said to have been spoken to their ancestor, “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years: and also that

* Bp. Sherlock on Prophecy, Disc. II. See also Note B.

nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge : and afterwards shall they come out with great substance," (Gen. xv. 13, 14.) would not, unaccompanied by the miracle, have produced the same effect. In this case (and there are many others of a similar description) it was the *miracle* which wrought conviction of the presence of Deity ; and the *prophecy* served but as an adjunct. The one was a direct proof, and was an argument touching the *power* of God ; the other was an auxiliary witness, confirmatory of the former, and demonstrated Jehovah's *omniscience*.

The gospel, as well as the law, was introduced to mankind with miraculous attestations, designed to establish the divine legation of Jesus. "The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not ; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works : that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." (John x. 25, and 37, 38.) At this time, the writings of the prophets were also cited, because they were considered of sufficient importance to command the attention of intelligent minds. Those to whom the gospel was at first proposed, were directed to the fulfilment of predictions, which foretold the advent of a Redeemer, and received the most minute ac-

complishment in Jesus of Nazareth. Here, then, prophecy, as well as miracles, was adduced as an evidence for the divine origin of the faith now offered. The one was not to supersede the other. They were to unite in their testimony. Such was the plan pursued by the founder of Christianity, and, after him, by his disciples. When our Saviour entered into conversation with Cleopas and his companion, as they were on their way to Emmaus, it is related that he thus addressed them: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke xxiv. 25—27.) Subsequently, we find the apostle Peter, when preaching to the Jews, and St. Paul, when discoursing before King Agrippa, adopting the same method of convincing their hearers, that they derived their commission from on high. When the congregation consisted of *Gentiles*, miracles, and other points were principally insisted on, because *they* were supposed to be ignorant of the prophecies; but when the audience was composed of *Jews*, it is observable that a reference was generally made to their sacred writings, with which they were presumed to be conversant; and the fulfilment of divine oracles, in the person of Jesus, was alleged as an

insuperable argument against their unbelief.* Thus St. Peter: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." (Acts iii. 22.) In like manner did St. Paul preach: "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people and to the Gentiles." (Acts xxvi. 22; see xiii. 23, &c.)

From what has already been advanced, we may learn that, although, for obvious reasons, prophecy was not originally of so much importance as miracles, and the latter afforded a more

* See Acts x. 38, 39; xvii. 23—31; and xvii. 2, 3.

cogent argument, under certain circumstances, than the former; yet, so soon as the accomplishment of predictions was sufficiently manifest, it was frequently brought forward, both to convince and to confirm. The word of prophecy may be compared to the rising sun, which, when it first appears above the horizon, emits but a few faint beams to cheer the inhabitants of the world, but, as it approximates to the meridian, increases in the brilliancy of its effulgence, and warms the earth with its glowing heat. It was reserved for later ages to witness the full import of that promise delivered to our first parents. The light then imparted was adequate to their support under the curse denounced; but it was only a glimmering ray which animated their hopes when they were expelled from Paradise.* Whereas the Christian, as he ponders over these words, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel," (Gen. iii. 15.) has before him an epitome of christian doctrine. The event has unravelled every mystery in which it was primarily involved. However obscure *before* the advent of the Messiah, it has long since been evident that the incarnation, the miraculous conception, the death, the resurrection of Jesus,

* See Note C.

and consequently, the atonement for sin, and the redemption of mankind by the Son of God, were shadowed out and foretold to Adam.*

There are contained in the Bible many other enunciations, pointing to the future, at the period when they were indited; but which, because they have been either entirely or in part fulfilled, present no difficulty respecting their signification, and are regarded as additional evidence to the veracity of our faith. There are, likewise, other prophecies now in course of accomplishment; and some, belonging to an era still distant from our own. These latter will not, it is probable, be fully understood, until the consummation of all things. However, we are now in possession of such an extraordinary accumulation of positive proof, derived from prophecy, for the establishment of our religious hopes, that we appeal to it with confidence, and would seriously urge it upon the attention of our hearers. The consideration of this subject is eminently calculated to enlarge our views of the superintending care of Providence, since it unfolds a beautiful illustration of those words: "I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not

* See Bishop Sherlock on Prophecy, Disc. III. wherein this text is ably treated.

yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isaiah xlv. 9, 10.) It not only baffles the ingenuity of infidels, but also may have a beneficial influence upon the lives of the faithful: for it leads us to think more and more deeply upon the transitory nature of all sublunary employments, and, as it shews the certainty of God's word, in events already past, so may we regard it as an earnest and a pledge to the believer for the fulfilment of promises yet to be realized.*

The evidence from prophecy is, perhaps, more striking and conclusive than many Christians are apt to conceive. It is irrefragable. Let it be admitted as an axiom, that no mortal, unassisted by the Deity, can dive into futurity,† and what further testimony can we require for the truth of the Bible, than a comparison of the pages of history with the revelations of the Bible? The one stamps the divinity of the other. Those who would resolve into *chance* all the fulfilled predictions of the Scripture, are either ignorant or malicious. It is beyond the range of mathematical power to calculate the chances that are against such an hypothesis.‡ And yet there are some men who will embrace this or any other absurdity, rather than admit the truth of re-

* See Joshua xxiii. 14.

† See Note D.

‡ See Note E.

ligion, and conform themselves to its hallowed precepts. O, how truly has it been declared, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, *because their deeds were evil.*" (John iii. 19.)

But you, my dear brethren, will make it your delight, to search the Holy Scriptures. It is imperative upon Christians, in such an age as this, when there is manifested so much contempt of God, when the most strenuous efforts are being made for the overthrow of religion, and the substitution of anarchy, to be well grounded in their belief, to examine into their opinions, and to determine, not only whether they themselves are convinced of the reality of their views, but also whether they would be able to defend their tenets, should they unexpectedly come in contact with a disputer. The study of the prophecies, if pursued with a humble mind, you will find of great advantage;* and the more you become acquainted with this most interesting portion of the sacred writings, the more will you appreciate the following exhortation of St. Peter: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in

* See Note F.

your hearts : knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man : but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Pet. i. 19.)

Having thus offered some observations on prophecy in general, let us now proceed to make some inquiries concerning Daniel in particular. Our text introduces him to our notice, accompanied by three other Jews, as a captive in a heathen land. From the preceding verses, we learn the cause of his present situation. “ In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem, and besieged it. And the Lord gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into the land of Shinar, to the house of his god ; and he brought the vessels into the treasure-house of his god. And the king spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, that he should bring certain of the children of Israel, and of the king’s seed, and of the princes ; children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans. And the king ap-

pointed them a daily provision of the king's meat, and of the wine which he drank; so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king. Now among these were of the children of Judah, Daniel, Haniah, Mishael, and Azariah."

Reserving for our next discourse the historical particulars connected with this first captivity of the Jews, it will suffice, on the present occasion, to observe that our prophet was subjected to the degradation of exile, in consequence of the victory obtained over his countrymen by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Daniel was descended from the kings of Judah; he is supposed to have been about eighteen years of age, when carried out of Judæa; and to have been born at Upper Bethoron, mentioned by Joshua as one of the boundaries of the inheritance of the children of Ephraim.* (Josh. xvi. 5.) It was in the *fourth* year of the reign of Jehoiakim, corresponding with the year of the world, 3398, and 606 years before the christian era,† that Daniel and his companions were thus estranged from the land of their forefathers. These four individuals were chosen by the master of the eunuchs, on account of their promising appearance; for he was enjoined by the victorious king to select from

* Bp. Gray's Key to the Old Testament.

† Dr. Prideaux. See Note G.

amongst the conquered those who had descended from royalty, and were otherwise qualified for the occupations of a court. Herein we perceive the fulfilment of a prediction, delivered, about a hundred years before, by the prophet Isaiah, who thus addressed Hezekiah: "Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house shall be carried to Babylon And of thy sons that shall issue from thee shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." (Isaiah xxxix. 6.)

Our text, also, informs us, that the names of these captive Jews were changed.* Daniel was henceforward to be called Belteshazzar, which signifies the "treasure of Bel"—Bel being a Babylonish deity. It was an ancient custom with masters to treat their slaves in this way, as it afforded a proof of their authority. Thus Pharaoh altered the name of Joseph to that of "Zaphnath-paaneah," or, revealer of secrets. Another requirement to be complied with, before these chosen Israelites could be admitted into the presence of the king, was, that they should be educated, during the space of three years, in the language and learning of the Chaldeans. The subsequent history of Daniel shews the high credit which he soon attained in the heathen court; and we learn, upon the authority of

* See Note H.

Josephus, that this man of God excelled, not only as a prophet, but likewise in other branches of knowledge. The encomium he has so well bestowed upon Daniel is too interesting not to be mentioned. I will quote the passage from his works, persuaded, as I am, that the practical reflections interspersed will meet with a response from every Christian's heart. For the sake of the uninformed, I will first remark, that Josephus was a Jew—that he was a general in the Jewish army—that he lived in the first century of the christian era, being present at the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened in the year 70, and that he has written a very faithful history of his people, and of the Jewish wars.

The testimony of Josephus is as follows :*
“ Now, when Daniel was become so illustrious and famous, on account of the opinion men had that he was beloved of God, he built a tower at Ecbatana, in Media : it was a most elegant building, and wonderfully made, and it is still remaining, and preserved to this day ; and to such as see it, it appears to have been lately built, and to have been no older than that very day ; when any one looks upon it, it is so fresh, flourishing, and beautiful, and no way grown old in so long a time ; for buildings suffer the same as men do, they grow old as well as they, and by

* Antiquities, B. x. ch. 11.

numbers of years their strength is dissolved, and their beauty withered. Now they bury the kings of Media, of Persia, and Parthia, in this tower, to this day; and he who was intrusted with the care of it, was a Jewish priest; which thing is also observed to this day. But it is fit to give an account of what this man did, which is most admirable to hear; for he was so happy as to have strange revelations made to him, and those as to one of the greatest of the prophets, inso-much, that while he was alive he had the esteem and applause, both of the kings and of the multitude; and now he is dead, he retains a remembrance that will never fail, for the several books that he wrote and left behind him are still read by us till this time; and from them we believe that Daniel conversed with God; for he did not only prophesy of future events, as did the other prophets, but he also determined the time of their accomplishment; and while the prophets used to foretel misfortunes, and, on that account, were disagreeable, both to the kings and to the multitude, Daniel was to them a prophet of good things, and this to such a degree, that, by the agreeable nature of his predictions, he procured the good will of all men; and, by the accomplishment of them, he procured the belief of their truth, and the opinion of a sort of divinity for himself among the multitude."

The historian then proceeds to mention some of

the prophecies delivered by Daniel, and comments upon their fulfilment. Such, for instance, as predicted the triumph of the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans, and those in particular which pointed to Antiochus Epiphanes. The subject seems to have made a serious impression upon his mind, as it gave rise to the following judicious and instructive observations: "All these things did this man leave in writing, as God had shewn them to him, insomuch, that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honour wherewith God honoured Daniel; and may thence discover how the epicureans are in error, who cast Providence out of human life, and do not believe that God takes care of the affairs of the world, nor that the universe is governed and continued in being by that blessed and immortal nature, but say that the world is carried along of its own accord, without a ruler and a curator; which, were it destitute of a guide to conduct it, as they imagine, would be like ships without pilots, which we see drowned by the winds, or like chariots without drivers, which are overturned; so would the world be dashed to pieces by its being carried without a Providence, and so perish, and come to nought. So that, by the fore-mentioned predictions of Daniel, those men seem to me very much to err from the truth, who determine that God exercises no providence

over human affairs; for if that were the case, that the world went on by mechanical necessity, we should not see that all things would come to pass according to his prophecy."

It now only remains for me to remark, concerning Daniel himself, that he flourished during the successive reigns of several Babylonish and Median kings, survived the siege and capture of Babylon, and, although he was alive in the third year of the reign of Cyrus, was soon afterwards gathered to his fathers.* Some critics imagine that he returned to Judæa at the expiration of the captivity; and, in support of this opinion, they refer to the Book of Nehemiah, wherein his name is mentioned among many others. (Neh. x. 6.) But there is not sufficient reason to agree with them. When this holy man beheld the vision, revealed to him in the third year of Cyrus, corresponding with the year 534, before Christ, he must have attained the age of ninety;† and it is more probable he died soon after this, and was buried, either at Babylon, (as Epiphanius and others suppose,) where, it is said, his sepulchre was seen in the royal cave; or else that his mortal remains were interred at Shushan, where at times he was wont to reside."‡ (Dan. viii. 2.)

The style of this prophet is considered good.

* See Gray's Key.

† See Note I.

‡ See Gray's Key, and Prideaux's Connection.

It is concise and clear. The language he employed was Chaldee, from the fourth verse of the second to the end of the seventh chapter; for, treating therein of Babylonish affairs, he wrote in the Babylonish or Chaldaic tongue. All the rest is in Hebrew; and the entire book is in prose. The first six chapters are chiefly historical; the remainder are prophetical, extending through many ages, even to the end of the world.* Sir Isaac Newton,† who has written a dissertation upon Daniel, is of opinion that the several papers, composing this inspired book, were collected together by Ezra, after the death of its author; and that the first six chapters, being historical, are the work of another individual. But his argument is not sufficiently strong to do away with the impression, more generally received, that Daniel himself arranged, in their present form, the whole of the writings that bear his name.‡

When it is considered how incontrovertible a testimony is afforded from this portion of Scripture, as well against Judaism as against infidelity, we may expect that both infidels and Jews have endeavoured to invalidate its authority. Accordingly, we find the degenerate seed of Abraham have degraded, in a certain degree, this important

* See Note K.

† Observations on Daniel, chap. 1.

‡ Gray's Key.

book, by assigning it a place in the Hagiographa,* or that division of their holy scriptures regarded by them as being inferior to the prophets. The reason they have assigned for this unjustifiable proceeding is, that Daniel lived in the magnificence of a court; which, they say, was inconsistent with the lowly style of the prophets. These Jewish doctors seem to have imbibed different sentiments from those expressed by Ezekiel, who, speaking ironically of the prince of Tyre, says: "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel;" (Ezek. xxviii. 3.) and surely they must have forgotten the meed of praise bestowed upon him by the Almighty: "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xiv. 14—20.) It is not difficult for Christians to discover why they so acted. These prophecies, as our succeeding Lectures will demonstrate, point to Jesus of Nazareth, as the Messiah; and, *therefore*, are not acceptable to an unbelieving Israelite. However, we have seen what was the opinion of Josephus; and we may remember that the character of "prophet" (Matt. xxiv. 15.) was attributed to him by the Saviour. Indeed, if we had no such evidence in his favour, either from God or from man, the extraordinary fulfilment of his predic-

* See Note L.

tions would convince every unprejudiced mind that he was gifted with inspiration, and was under the guidance of an omniscient Being. (John xiii. 19; Isaiah xlviii. 3—5.)

The sceptic, treating the whole volume of Scripture as an invention, necessarily denies the prophetic character to any of its component parts. But, although he disallows the claim to a heavenly origin, he has still to dispose of the facts therein contained. No one disputes the veracity of some portions of the book now under consideration. They are borne out by the concurrent voice of profane historians. Nay, the infidel is so assured of the correctness of particular events herein recorded, that he has laboured to convert this very fact into an argument against their inspiration. Porphyry, a learned heathen, who flourished in the third century, and was a bitter enemy to Christianity, published a work, in which he first proved that, in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes, was literally fulfilled a section of the eleventh chapter of Daniel, and then argues that it was not written until after the death of Antiochus, and, instead of being a prediction, was merely a narrative of transactions already accomplished.* Collins, and other unbelievers of inferior note, have followed in the track of Porphyry.† But the falsity of their

* See Note M.

† Bp. Newton on the Prophecies.

scheme may thus summarily be exposed. The prophecies of Daniel were shewn to Alexander the Great, when he visited Jerusalem, in the fourth year of the reign of Darius the Persian, that is, 332 years before Christ;* whereas, Antiochus Epiphanes did not commence his reign until the year before Christ, 175.† Consequently, the occurrences, mentioned in this scripture, were foreshewn at least 157 years before they were brought to pass. This matter will engage our further attention in a future Lecture; and, as we proceed, we shall be able to establish the absurdity of the gratuitous assertion, that the prophecies of the Bible are the records of fulfilled events, by shewing how Daniel pointed to christian times, and to a period in close alliance with our own.

And now, beloved brethren, permit me, in conclusion, to express my ardent hope that this series of discourses, commenced upon one of the most interesting portions of sacred writ, may eventually prove beneficial to us all. If, as we pursue the subject, our minds do not become more enlightened, our thoughts more solemnized, our affections more detached from this earth, our hearts more impressed with the awful reality of divine things, and our souls more sanctified, more prepared for an eternity of bliss, my labour

* Prideaux; see also Note N.

† Ibid. anno 175.

in composing, and your attention in listening to, these practical expositions of the prophet, will have been equally bestowed in vain. O, let your prayer be that you may not only study, but understand the Scriptures; not only understand them, but experience that they are the “power of God;” (1 Cor. i. 18.) that they alone can make you “wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus;” constantly remembering, that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. iii. 15—17.) The Bible is an instrument whereby the Almighty convinces the sinner of his lost condition. It is a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” It speaks to the conscience. The truths therein revealed are peculiarly suited to our spiritual wants. We are earnestly warned of danger, and persuasively invited to partake of mercy. David found that it was a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his path. And every believer, who implicitly relies upon the promises, and conforms himself to the precepts, which are there made known to our fallen race, will realize the possession of that peace which the world can neither give nor take away. If we seek, we shall find; if we ask, we shall receive. But humility and patience must accompany our in-

quiries, and faith and perseverance must attend our prayers. *Then* shall we experience the value of this sacred volume, which, whilst it reveals to us our guilt and condemnation, points to the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” (John i. 29.) and imparts the divine assurance, “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. viii. 1.)

LECTURE II.

DANIEL, I. 9.

“ Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs.”

THE words which, on this occasion, I have chosen for our text, introduce Daniel to our observation as being highly favoured in the court of Babylon, and instruct us that his present advantageous position was owing to the goodness of God, who caused his servant to prosper in every thing that concerned him, and watched over him with the same care, now that he was an exile in an enemy's country, as when he was in the enjoyment of liberty in the land of his forefathers. This propitious circumstance in the life of our prophet might suggest matter for practical meditation, and we might individually be edified and comforted by the consideration of it. We may here certainly learn that, whatever are our difficulties, or wherever may be the place of our habitation, we are the object of our Creator's regard, and that, when acceptable in his sight, we are sure to be protected from every ill. “ Who is he that

will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (1 Pet. iii. 13.)

But as we shall have another opportunity, with the divine permission, to entertain such seasonable reflections, I will proceed at once to unfold the subject, promised in my last discourse, and which, as it relates to the cause of Daniel's banishment to Chaldea, will embrace the first captivity of the Jews.

The history of the chosen seed of Abraham has ever been regarded with interest by the biblical student; and it is certainly calculated to warn, encourage, guide, and comfort, every believer in the truth of Revelation. It is impossible to peruse the account of this people, as given in the Scriptures, without observing, in their afflictions and in their prosperity, the most forcible illustrations of the inspired word, "Be sure your sin will find you out;" and also the most exact fulfilment of the promise, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Numb. xxxii. 23. Deut. xxxiii. 25.)

No sooner had man forfeited his original righteousness, than wickedness began to abound in the earth, and the senseless worship of idols was substituted for the adoration of Jehovah. How soon actual idolatry commenced is not very easy precisely to determine. It is certain, however,

that this insult to the Deity was introduced at an early period. Dr. Lightfoot,* and other learned men, are of opinion that in the days of Seth the creature was worshipped instead of the Creator; and that it was in consequence of this apostacy that Seth called his son Enos, which signifies *sorrowful*. The argument upon which this supposition depends is derived from the following passage: "And to Seth, to him also there was born a son, and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord;" (Gen. iv. 26.) which latter clause, according to many eminent critics, ought to be rendered, "men began *profanely* to call upon the name of the Lord." Maimonides, who is esteemed one of the best of the Jewish writers, entertains the same sentiment, for he says, "In the days of Enos the sons of Adam erred with great error, and the counsel of the wise men of that age became brutish, and Enos himself was one of them that erred; and their error was this: they said, Forasmuch as God hath created these stars and spheres to govern the world, and set them on high, and imparted honour unto them, and they are ministers that minister before him, it is meet that men should laud, and glorify, and give them honour When this thing was come up into their hearts they began to build temples

* See note A.

unto the stars, and to offer sacrifice unto them, and to laud and glorify them with words, and to worship before them, that they might in their evil opinion obtain favour of the Creator; and this was the root of idolatry.”* In the 6th chapter of Genesis we have a fearful account of the depravity then existing, when “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.” Here, although no particular sin is specified, yet is it probable, as Calmet well observes, that idolatry was one of the evil practices which thus offended the Creator. But, whenever men may have first so degraded themselves, it is evident that “gods many, and lords many,” soon were invented and abounded. The father of Abraham, if not Abraham himself, before his call, was an idolater, as we are expressly assured by Joshua, who “said unto all the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood”—that is, the river Euphrates—“in old time. Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.” (Josh. xxiv. 2.)

It is probable, indeed, that false worship was

* Cited in Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary. See also note B.

very prevalent at this early period,* and that Abraham was commanded to migrate to a distant country, in order that he might effectually be separated from the surrounding abominations with which his own family were associated.† Abraham was chosen, through grace, to be the instrument in conveying to mankind a knowledge of the one true and only God; and it was through his posterity alone that the nature and character of the Divine Being were handed down from age to age, until the diffusion of gospel light, no longer confined to an isolated people, dispersed the moral darkness from every place where Christ was received, and illumined the understanding of every nation by whom Christ was honoured.

The call of Abraham, related in the 12th chapter of Genesis, is generally believed to have occurred in the year of the world 2083, or 1921 years before the birth of Christ. Passing over the several interesting events transacted between this period and the Exodus, when the descendants of Abraham were delivered from Egyptian bondage—events which are familiar to every reader of the Bible—we are brought to the year of the world 2513, which accomplishes the 430 years mentioned by Moses in the book of Exodus, and corroborated by St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians.‡ (Exodus

* See note C.

† Note D.

‡ Note E.

xii. 40, 41. Gal. iii. 17.) Soon afterwards the law was promulged from Mount Sinai, and the strictest injunctions were given against the worshipping of idols. The people seem to have imbibed a predilection for the gods of the Egyptians, and, strange as it may appear to us, their attachment to idolatrous practices was so deeply seated as to render it necessary for the Almighty, who is jealous of his supremacy, to annex the severest penalty, even the punishment of death, to the violation of the command: "Thou shalt have no other gods but me." (Deut. xiii. 6—10.) But, notwithstanding the announcement of the divine displeasure at such apostacy, and in opposition to the positive proof they had received of a miraculous interposition in their favour, they allowed themselves to be enslaved by the vile passion, even before the thunders of Sinai had ceased, as it were, to reverberate upon their ears. "When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for, as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden ear-rings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which

were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf:* and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." (Exodus xxxii.)

You will observe, my dear brethren, that idolatry was the greatest insult that could be offered to the Creator; and the reason I am dwelling so largely upon the origin and progress of this particular sin, as degrading to humanity as it is offensive to God, is, because it was *idolatry* which prevented the prosperity of Israel, brought down upon them the heaviest calamities, terminated in the discomfiture and exile of the ten tribes, from which they have not as yet recovered, and ultimately led to the first captivity of the remnant of the chosen posterity of Abraham—the children of Judah and Benjamin. It is not, however, my intention to occupy more of our time upon this subject than is necessary. The grievous and inexcusable manner in which the Israelites lapsed into image worship, the proneness they continually exhibited to embrace the religion of their neighbours,† or to amalgamate their devotions with the ceremonies of the heathen among whom they dwelt, is probably

* See note F.

† See note G.; and Judges xviii. Numb. xxv., &c.

well known to all my hearers; as also the punishments so invariably inflicted upon their wilful blindness, their perversity, and their folly. Whilst the people were journeying through the wilderness, and after their settlement in Canaan, the same disposition was manifested, and the same wickedness was practised. Indeed, the whole Scripture history, from the Exodus to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, is almost an uninterrupted narration of untoward events, arising from Israel's departure from the true God. This conduct is the more extraordinary, inasmuch as the Gentile nations, who pre-occupied the territory allotted to the descendants of Abraham, were rooted out from the land, on account of their iniquity and *idolatry*;* and they were earnestly and persuasively cautioned against the danger of imitating the sad example: "When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, how did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto

* See Faber's *Horæ Mosaicæ*, B. I. sect. 2, chap. 5; and also Note H.

the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters have they burnt in the fire of their gods." And again, what an affectionate address was that which was delivered to the congregation by Joshua, only a short time before his death: "Now, therefore, fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Deut. xii. 29, and Josh. xxiv. 14.)

But promises and threats were alike unavailing. The response of the people to Joshua's exhortation, dictated to them, as one would think, by the principles of sober reason, "God forbid that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods," was contradicted, and proved to be fallacious by almost every action that followed. The sin of idolatry pervaded all ranks. Even Solomon was infected; and many of the succeeding kings abandoned themselves to the vitiating habit. Jeroboam set up "two calves of gold, and said . . . Behold thy gods, O Israel,

which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”* At a later period, Ahab, by a similar transgression, brought disgrace upon himself, and affliction upon his people. The interview between this prince and the prophet Elijah, and the transaction which then took place, when the pseudo-prophets were slain, afford an instance of the prevalence of false worship at that time; and we here also learn, that this impiety was the immediate cause of national calamity. For “it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father’s house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.” (1 Kings xviii.)

From what has now been brought before you, it will be sufficiently evident, that the wrath of God must have been provoked to the uttermost, by the frequent and gross apostacy of this favoured nation.† Let it not, however, be understood, that, during the whole of this period, the entire community were corrupted. Doubtless, God never left himself without a witness. A succession of prophets and holy men were raised up to testify against the surrounding wickedness; and their history‡ is not without examples of the

* See 1 Kings xi. and xii.

† See Isaiah i. 2—4.

‡ 1 Kings xix. 14—18; and 2 Kings x. 18—28.

piety and zeal of their kings, in putting away the contaminating instruments of the people's degeneracy, and proscribing the sacrifices and worship which were offered to dumb idols. As I have before observed, the intention of the Almighty in choosing Abraham, was, that a true knowledge of the unity of the Godhead might be preserved in the world, in contradistinction to the multifarious and inexplicable systems of polytheism, which had already so lamentably obtained. This merciful design on the part of the Creator was not to be over-ruled, either by the machinations of Satan, or the obstinacy of man. Idolatry abounded on every side. The Israelites could not be restrained from participating in the evil;—but still the light of truth was not suffered to be extinguished, and an acquaintance with Jehovah was handed down to posterity through the almost impenetrable mists of heathen darkness, “because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” (Rom. iii. 2.)

Having thus shewn, my brethren, the wickedness of the nation, it now devolves upon me to point out the punishment which followed. Solomon has declared, and he had himself to realize the fulfilment of his own prediction, “Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.” (Proverbs xi. 21.) It should ever be remembered, that sin cannot be committed with impunity. The delay of God's

anger is no proof that we are not grieving him. Our heavenly Father is compassionate, long-suffering, and delights in affording us opportunities of repenting. But there is a limitation to his forbearance. The reason which God assigned to Abraham for withholding from his posterity the promised land of Canaan until 400 years had elapsed, was, that not until then would the iniquity of the Amorites be at the full. This period was allowed to that sinful race to fill up the measure of their guilt. They accomplished it, and were destroyed. (2 Pet. iii. 9; Gen. xv. 16; and Deut. xx. 16—18.)

Let us, then, now inquire how the children of Israel were chastised after they refused to hearken to the voice of mercy. You will remember, that Abraham was called from beyond the river Euphrates, where he was living with his family, in consequence of the idolatry which prevailed there. In the wisdom of God, the inhabitants of this same country, viz. the Assyrians, were selected as the instruments for punishing the patriarch's descendants, on account of their lapsing into the same wickedness from which their ancestor had been delivered. In the year before Christ, 747, the ancient empire of Assyria was dissolved, on the death of Sardanapalus, and, instead of one, two kingdoms were established, Media and Babylon.* The former

* See Note I.

was founded by Arbaces, who, in Scripture, is called Tiglath-Pileser, or Tilgath-Pilneser.* This prince took up his abode at Nineveh. The latter, or Babylonian empire, which included Chaldea and Arabia, came into the possession of Belesis, whose scriptural appellation is Baladan, the father of Merodach-baladan, who sent letters and a present to Hezekiah upon his recovery from sickness.† These people were employed to execute the divine vengeance upon apostate Israel. The one carried away the ten tribes, and, subsequently, the remaining two were led into captivity by the other.

In the year before Christ, 729,‡ Shalmaneser (called Shalman by the prophet Hosea, and in Tobit styled Enemessar) succeeded his father, Tiglath-Pileser, on the Assyrian throne, and soon afterwards made an expedition against Hoshea, the king of Israel, and subjected Samaria to his dominion; leaving, however, the king therein as his servant and tributary. Hoshea entered into a confederacy with So, the king of Egypt, and refused to send his wonted presents into Assyria; whereupon Shalmaneser, in the seventh year of Hoshea, and in the beginning of the fourth year of Hezekiah, king of Judah, came up with an army, and besieged

* 2 Kings xv. 29; 1 Chron. v. 6.

† Isaiah xxxix. 1.

‡ Prideaux's Connection,

Samaria; and after three years the city was taken.* This event occurred in the latter part of the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign, in the ninth of Hoshea's reign,† 254 years after the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam, 1200 from the call of Abraham, and 721 before the birth of Christ.‡

It had been predicted by the prophet Ahizah, in the reign of Jeroboam, and afterwards by Hosea and Micah, that this calamity should come upon the Israelites. History shews the fulfilment of the prophecy. This people (that is, ten of the twelve tribes descended from Jacob) were now banished from the land of their fathers, their king was thrown into prison, their city was rifled by the foreign troops, and themselves were carried off and located beyond the river Euphrates, in Halah and Habor, and in other cities of the Medes. Often had their enemies afflicted them before; but now, their wickedness being at the full, their punishment was also decreed to the uttermost. Their government was utterly destroyed, and their cities were re-peopled by inhabitants brought from afar. Josephus states, that Samaria was now assigned to the Cutheans, a race from Cutha, a country in Persia.§ This captivity has endured upwards

* 2 Kings xvii. xviii.

† See Note K.

‡ Prideaux.

§ See Note L. ; and 2 Kings xvii. 23, 24.

of 2560 years ; for they have not as yet returned : nor has the most learned inquirer, nor the most indefatigable traveller been able to define the place of their habitation for many centuries past. It is certain that these ten tribes are in existence, because their restoration and re-union with the house of Judah are events clearly foretold in Scripture. Thus prophecies Isaiah : “ The envy, also, of Ephraim ”—Ephraim here, as in other parts of the Bible, denotes the ten tribes—“ shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off ; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.” But, still, there is no one who can tell where they are to be found ; and it is needless to indulge in unsupported conjecture.*

It may not be improper to observe, in this part of our discourse, that the Samaritans, so frequently mentioned in the New Testament, were the descendants of these Cutheans, and other heathen nations, who were planted by Shalmaneser, and afterwards by Esar-haddon, in the territory of the banished tribes ; and that their numbers were greatly increased in later ages, by the admixture of apostate Jews.†

Listen, now, my brethren, to the cause which

* Note M. ; and see Isaiah xi. 13 ; Ezekiel xxxvii. 19 ; and Hosea iii.

† See Note N.

the Almighty himself assigns for thus visiting his people with so severe an affliction. God does not *willingly* chastise mankind, but they bring their miseries and their degradation upon themselves.* Thus speaks the inspired volume: "So it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: and there they burnt incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them, and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger; for they served idols, whereof the Lord had said unto them, ye shall not do this thing." (2 Kings xvii. 7.)

It seems a well attested fact, that man will learn the consequence of departing from God by no experience but his own. One would have thought that the captivity of Israel's ten tribes would have served as a beacon to Judah and Benjamin, and have warned them of the danger of a sinful course. However, this effect was not produced. Wicked princes reigned in Jerusalem, as well as

* Lamentations iii. 33; Hosea xiii. 9.

in Samaria, and idolatry was practised by the Jews as well as by their brethren. Although we read of pious kings, as Hezekiah and Josiah, during whose government the kingdom flourished, and was wonderfully protected from the assaults of powerful and threatening enemies, yet is their history, for the most part, a narrative of impiety and disasters. Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, restored the idolatrous worship which his father had abolished, and appears to have vied with Jeroboam in giving offence to the Deity. It was in this reign that the following prediction was delivered; "The Lord spake by his servants the prophets, saying, because Manasseh, king of Judah, hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies." (2 Kings xxi. 10.) At a subsequent period, even though good Josiah had reformed his kingdom, it is said, "Notwith-

standing the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, my name shall be there." (2 Kings xxiii. 26.) The prophets, Ezekiel and Jeremiah, are frequent and explicit in their denunciations of divine wrath upon Judah. The former was commanded, on one occasion, thus to represent the impending doom of his devoted city: "Thou, also, son of man, take thee a tile, and lay it before thee, and pourtray upon it the city, even Jerusalem; and lay siege against it, and build a fort against it, and cast a mount against it Moreover, he said unto me, son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment." (Ezek. iv.) The prophecies of Jeremiah abound with similar predictions: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Because ye have not heard my words, behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these

nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." (Jer. xxv. 8.) It appears that the most earnest exhortations had been given to the people, and that for the space of three and twenty years they had been warned by the mouth of Jeremiah of the evils with which they were to be visited. But every effort made to save them was ineffectual; and, therefore, the righteous judgment of an offended God was manifested in their punishment. (See Habakkuk i. 6.)

Passing over several calamities which befel the Jews at different periods, we arrive at the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, when Nebuchadnezzar (who had recently been permitted to share the kingdom of Babylon with his father, Nabopolassar) invaded Judæa, and laid siege to Jerusalem.* This happened 606 years before Christ. Jehoiakim was taken prisoner, but, having humbled himself, was released, and became tributary to his conqueror. Before Nebuchadnezzar, however, removed from Jerusalem, he sent numbers of the Jews captives to Babylon, amongst whom, as was mentioned in

* See Note G. on Lecture I.

my last Lecture, was the prophet Daniel, who was selected, with others, by Ashpenaz, the master of the eunuchs. Several of the vessels of the house of God were also, at this time, transported into Chaldea, and were deposited in the temple of Bel, the Babylonish deity. "From hence," says Prideaux, "must be reckoned the beginning of the 70 years of the Babylonish captivity, foretold by the prophet Jeremiah; and the fourth year of Jehoiakim must be the first year in that computation."*

I have now, my dear brethren, given an outline of the chequered history of Abraham's descendants until the period from which the Book of Daniel commences. But, before I conclude, I will briefly narrate the afflictive events that still came upon Jerusalem and its inhabitants, as other matters will hereafter engage our attention.

After the Chaldeans had departed from the city, Jehoiakim, instead of repenting, was hardened under the dispensation with which he had been visited. The treatment Jeremiah experienced, and the fate of Baruch's roll, are circumstances well known to you all. In the eleventh year† of his reign he rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, who sent another army, com-

* Prideaux's Connection, anno 606.

† 2 Kings xxiii. xxiv.

posed of different nations, against him; and the result of this expedition was, that the king of Judah was slain, and his corpse deprived of the rite of sepulture, according to the words of the prophet: "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." (Jer. xxii. 18.) His son Jehoiachin* succeeded him, but, after a short reign of three months, was carried prisoner to Babylon. This event was likewise particularly foretold.† Great numbers of Jews, amongst whom was Ezekiel,‡ were now sent into the enemy's land, and Mattaniah, whose name was changed to Zedekiah, was intrusted with the government of Jerusalem. Here he remained eleven years. During this period Jeremiah continued to prophesy in Jerusalem, and Ezekiel commenced the delivery of his predictions in Babylon. But the time was arrived for the completion of this first reduction of the Jewish polity. It was foretold to Zedekiah that he should be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon; and this remarkable circumstance was announced concerning him: "I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there." (Ezek. xii. 13.) In the eleventh year of his reign, the city of

* Called also Jeconiah, and Coniah.

† Jer. xxii. 24.

‡ Josephus, Ant. B. x. ch. 6. sect. 3.

Jerusalem, after having been besieged for about eighteen months,* was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. (2 Kings xxv.) Zedekiah fled to the plains of Jericho, where he was captured; he was carried into the presence of the Babylonian monarch at Riblah, in Syria; and his eyes being put out, was sent to Babylon, where he died. Thus was fulfilled the above cited Scripture. He died in Babylon, and *yet did not see it.*† This occurred 588 years before the birth of Christ, and after Daniel had been a captive for eighteen years; which space of time seems to have been granted to the Jews in order that they might repent.‡ In the same year Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, plundered the magnificent temple of all its treasures, and razed to the ground that sacred and costly edifice, built by Solomon, and dedicated to the service of Israel's God with so much religious joy only 416 years before its entire destruction.

Jerusalem was now completely reduced, its riches exhausted, thousands of its inhabitants perished during the siege, either by famine or the sword; and the remainder of the people, with the exception of a few who were left to till the ground, were hurried into exile. "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how

* Josephus, Ant. B. x. chapters 7th and 8th.

† See Note O.

‡ Prideaux's Connection, anno 588.

is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed!"* (Lam. i. 1.)

These disastrous events, so clearly developed in the page of sacred writ, should not be neglected, either by communities or individuals. It is a fearful thing to trifle with the Lord. Consider the punishments, the disappointments, and the vexations, which have attended the followers of an evil course. Reflect upon the quietude forfeited by the ungodly; and contrast, if haply you are able, the manifold troubles resulting from a disobedient or thoughtless life, with the inward tranquillity and peace enjoyed by the sincere believer. The true Christian is emphatically a happy man. He endeavours to detach his affections from mere sublunary pleasures, and to fix his heart upon the realities of heaven. We learn from past occurrences the inevitable consequence of rebelling against our Maker; and, whilst it is our duty to warn the unwary sinner of impending wrath, we feel also that it is our peculiar privilege, as "ambassadors for Christ," to communicate the divine promise, freely offered by the Almighty to every creature, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the

* See Note P.

death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live : turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) In Jesus Christ there is complete redemption. He is the mediator between God and man. He invites us to partake of his purchased blessings, pardon, and peace, "without money and without price." Where shall we find abiding happiness, if we seek it not in Him ? "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 11.)

LECTURE III.

DANIEL, II. 34.

“Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.”

HAVING, in my last Lecture, continued the painful history of the Jews until the complete destruction of their civil and ecclesiastical polity, I was led to the consideration of a period coeval with the eighteenth year of Daniel's captivity, which also corresponded with the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. We must now, however, return to an earlier date, as our prophet had been but a short time in Babylon when there occurred that remarkable transaction recorded in the second chapter of his book, which so providentially terminated in the promotion of himself and his companions.

It has been already observed, that the ancient Assyrian empire, founded by Nimrod, or, as others suppose, by Asshur, was divided into two kingdoms upon the death of Sardanapalus, after it had existed entire for about 1300 years; and

that Babylon was chosen by Nabonassar, or Bel-
lesis (called Baladan in Scripture), as the capital
of one division, while Nineveh was retained for
the metropolis of the other. A succession of
kings was raised up to occupy the Chaldean
throne, with the exception of one or two brief
interregnums, until the twenty-seventh year of
Esarhaddon, or 680 years before the birth of
Christ, when, the Chaldean empire having now
been for the space of eight years in a state of
confusion, in consequence of its king, Mesessi-
mordacus, leaving no issue, this prince seized
upon Babylon, and added it to his other domi-
nions, inherited from his father, Sennacherib
Thus these two kingdoms were again re-united
under one head.* Esarhaddon, or, as he is
otherwise called, Assaradinus,† was succeeded by
three other emperors,‡ the last of whom was
Nabopollasar, who commenced his reign 625
years before Christ, and, after managing his af-
fairs by himself for nineteen years, admitted his
son, Nebuchadnezzar, to a share in the govern-
ment, and, with this assistance, continued two
years longer, when he died, leaving Nebuchad-
nezzar the sole ruler of this extensive and potent
territory.§

At the opening of this second chapter an ap-

* Prideaux, anno 680.

† Called in Ezra iv. 10, "Asnapper"

‡ See note A.

§ Note B.

parent chronological difficulty occurs, which is easily obviated by the consideration of what has just been stated. The prophet was carried into captivity in the first year of Nebuchadnezzar, and underwent a course of education in the literature and science of Chaldea for the space of *three years before he was introduced to the presence of the king*; whereas it is here said that Nebuchadnezzar received the interpretation of his dream from Daniel in the *second year* of his reign. To remove this supposed contrariety, we must remember that there were two methods by which the years of this reign were computed. The first commenced when the son was united in regal authority with his father, which was the mode of reckoning adopted by the Jews, for *then* this people began to feel the effects of Nebuchadnezzar's power. The second was dated from the death of Nabollasar, or two years later, and was the era whence the Babylonians themselves entered upon their calculation. Thus, the second year of Nebuchadnezzar, as here mentioned, corresponded, not with the second, but with the *fourth* year of the prophet's captivity.*

The chapter now proceeds to unfold an historical account of a most remarkable dream vouchsafed to the king of Babylon, which, as it had left only a confused impression upon his

* Note C.

memory, caused him considerable agitation when he awoke. He immediately summoned those who were esteemed the wisest in his realm—the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans—under which appellations were respectively included, the philosophers, or wise men,* of that day; those who pretended to reveal the hidden things of futurity by the position of the stars—wizards and necromancers, who consulted familiar spirits and the dead; and, lastly, those who were called Chaldeans, not merely on account of the country they inhabited (for probably all the above classes were natives of Chaldea), but as denoting that they were men of superior skill in astrology, and in the art of divination—it being proverbial that the people of this land were well versed in such matters. It appears that similar characters were known at an early period. Pharaoh, in the days of Joseph, had recourse to them when similarly troubled with a dream; and the fact of their existence in the time of Moses is evident from the divine law which was instituted, “There shall not be found among you any one that . . . useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an

* See note D.

abomination unto the Lord.” (Deut. xviii. 10—12.) The case of Saul and the witch of Endor is well known. These pretenders seem indeed to have abounded in all ages, and in all countries, and were encouraged to persevere by the profits which accrued from their vocation. The Scriptures, and profane history, afford many examples. After the ascension of our Saviour, the apostles encountered them in the prosecution of their lucrative and unholy calling. Elymas, the sorcerer, was seeking to turn away the proconsul* from the faith in the island of Paphos, when St. Paul rebuked him: “O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” (Acts xiii. 10.) And, on another occasion, we read of “a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.” (Acts xvi. 16.)

Would that we could say, dear brethren, that such practices were now unknown amongst us. But, alas! these iniquitous deceivers were not confined to ages darker than our own. In this very country, in this very city, and at this present time, there are to be found individuals who, by consulting the stars, or, by other pretended means of diving into the future, succeed in imposing upon the credulity of their ignorant and

* See note E.

unwary dupes. Females in the lower grades of society are constantly becoming victims to the designs of these wicked impostors; and even those who belong to higher circles have been known to sacrifice their better judgment by yielding their faith to the falsities of abandoned fortune-tellers.

But to return to Nebuchadnezzar. The power assumed by ancient sovereigns, or delegated to them by an ignorant multitude, was despotic and tyrannical in the extreme. History abounds with examples of injustice and cruelty practised by the rulers of the earth, who seem to have been more desirous of proving the wickedness of the human heart by the display of their own atrocities, than of evidencing their fitness for the high duties with which they were intrusted, by administering laws with equanimity, and consulting the happiness and prosperity of the people. The king of Babylon was one of these impetuous and arbitrary rulers. No sooner were the wise men of his kingdom summoned into his presence than they were commanded, upon pain of immediate death, to make known the dream that had escaped the memory of their sovereign. Their reply was as follows: "Then spake the Chaldeans to the king in Syriac,* O king, live for ever: tell thy servants the dream, and we

* The language of the text is here changed from the Hebrew, as was observed in Lecture I.

will shew the interpretation." The above request should at least have been complied with; or, if this was impossible, the command ought not to have been given. The promise, however, of the Chaldeans was rash and impious, as it was not within the range of their power to disclose the signification of the dream, even had it been revealed to them. They must have now felt the danger of their calling. The deceits they had practised upon others threatened to demand the severest reparation. "The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, The thing is gone from me: if ye will not make known unto me the dream, with the interpretation thereof, ye shall be cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made a dung-hill." Every plea was in vain. Only one alternative was granted. They must either declare the dream, or be destroyed. The king charged them with the intention of gaining time by the arguments they offered: "Ye have prepared lying and corrupt words to speak before me till the time be changed." This observation may imply that a specific hour had been mentioned for their execution, and, if by any means they could survive it, the decree would be rendered void; or, it may have arisen from a latent hope that something would happen to transfer the attention of the king to other objects, which being discovered by Nebuchadnezzar, increased his anger, and drew from him the posi-

tive asseveration, "There is but one decree for you."

It was at this crisis that the all-seeing eye of Jehovah was directed to his chosen servant, the youthful Daniel, who was now about twenty years of age. He and his three companions were classed with the wise men of the province, and, consequently, came within the limit of the irreversible decree. The Chaldeans again pleaded with their obdurate prince: "There is not a man upon the earth that can shew the king's matter; therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." Their destruction, however, was determined. The four captive Jews were accordingly now exposed to the royal vengeance.

When Arioch, the captain of the royal guard, or chief of the executioners, came to Daniel, the prophet requested an audience of the king, which being granted, a promise was given, that if time were allowed, the interpretation of the dream would be declared. Daniel knew in whom he believed, and therefore it was not the threat of an earthly potentate that could intimidate or dishearten him. Prayer, earnest prayer, directed to the "Father of lights, with whom is no va-

riableness, neither shadow of turning," will move that omnipotent arm which regulates and sustains the order of the universe. He seems to have known the gracious truth, afterwards so emphatically affirmed by the Saviour, that "where two or three are met together," in the name of God, there will be vouchsafed the presence of the Deity. He communicated to his brethren, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, the danger to which they were exposed, and invited them to join with himself in imploring the timely aid of the God of heaven. The petition was preferred; and, according to the promise of our eternal and Almighty Friend, "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me:" it was speedily and abundantly answered. "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven."

Some writers suppose, and the opinion is adopted by Sir Isaac Newton,* that the knowledge of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was conveyed to the prophet in a corresponding dream. Be this as it may, the secret was disclosed in answer to the prayer which had been offered, and the praise was ascribed unto Him to whom alone it was due. "Daniel answered, and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wis-

* Observations on Daniel, chap iii,

dom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast made known unto us the king's matter."

The prophet was again brought into the palace, and, in answer to the inquiry of Nebuchadnezzar, acknowledged that he was acquainted with the dream, and with the interpretation; but at the same time disclaimed all pretensions to personal merit; affording us a striking contrast between the lowly disposition of an enlightened saint, and the arrogance and self-conceit of the worldly minded. "There is a God in heaven," said this holy man, "that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days."

We have now arrived, my brethren, at that point in our discourse which invites us to consider the celebrated dream of the king of Babylon; an event in the annals of the Chaldean history, involving the principal features in the future revolutions of the world, and forming the groundwork of

subsequent predictions of Daniel. It is probable that the king, whilst reclining on his couch, had been revolving in his mind the extent and prosperity of his dominions, and wondering within himself whether the fruits of his conquests would be enjoyed by his own posterity, or, whether his territory, experiencing the fate of all human things, would eventually be reduced, or pass into the hand of a stranger. Whilst indulging this prospective reverie, he may have fallen asleep; and the thoughts which agitated or amused him during his waking moments, may thus have been, though under the controul of Providence, the natural cause of his ensuing dream. This idea, which has been adopted by some authors, is derived from the following clause in the opening of the prophet's speech: "As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter."

The dream, as I have just remarked, involved the history of the future periods of the world, inasmuch as the five kingdoms, represented by the "image" and the "stone," extend, in their consecutive duration, from the age in which the dream was revealed, to the consummation of all things. On the present occasion, I purposely avoid entering into a minute examination of this interesting subject; because, as you are all perhaps aware, the seventh chapter of Daniel is occupied with the same matter. If we are per-

mitted to continue these Lectures, the full signification of this extraordinary vision shall be laid before you; and the beautiful harmony between the page of history and the predictions of Scripture shall be pourtrayed.

However, before we proceed to the text, selected as being exceedingly appropriate to the services of this sacred festival,* I will introduce the dream, and briefly inform you of its import. "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee, and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."

The interpretation, immediately subjoined, explained to the king that the several parts of this

* Christmas Day.

image represented four kingdoms; the first of which was his own, signified by the golden head: "thou art this head of gold." The three others were to arise in succession, and the last, when in the zenith of its power, was to be "strong as iron," but eventually to be divided and weakened. The fulfilment of this prophetic dream is shewn by the concurrent testimony of historians. The four kingdoms, in their order, are as follows: the Babylonian, the Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman; each of which arose and gained the ascendancy, as was foretold by our prophet. "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee;" the Persian kingdom was inferior to the Babylonian, as will be hereafter shewn: "and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth;" accomplished when Alexander the Great stretched his conquest beyond the Indus: "and the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise;" also literally fulfilled when the world, as far as was then known, acknowledged the sovereignty of the Roman arms.*

Daniel, having unfolded to Nebuchadnezzar the signification of the image, and forewarned him that his empire should be subverted, pro-

* See Note F.

ceeds to explain the meaning of the “stone cut out without hands;” assuring him that all earthly kingdoms should eventually be overthrown, and temporal things should one day succumb to things spiritual. “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.” In these words were predicted the incarnation of the blessed Jesus, the introduction of the gospel of peace, and the final triumph of eternal truth. The miraculous conception of Christ is intended by the “stone cut out *without hands* ;” the rise and progress of his religion, not only without the sanction and assistance of human wealth, wisdom, and valour, but in direct opposition to the combined efforts of earth and hell, are signified by the emphatic expression, “the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom;” the perpetuity of our holy faith is declared in the promise, “it shall never be destroyed, it shall stand for ever;” and the complete victory of the cross over the powers of darkness, the diffusion of gospel light from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, the interminable reign of uninterrupted and unalloyed holiness and bliss, are foreshadowed in the concluding feature of the dream, “the stone that smote the image

became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.”*

Observe, now, my brethren, how the divine word has been verified; and, whilst you reflect upon the fulfilment of past predictions, take courage and be comforted in the contemplation of the future. “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” (Numb. xxiii. 19.) It was foretold to the king of Babylon that, during the ascendancy of the fourth kingdom, symbolized by the “iron legs” in the image, a “stone” should be “cut out without hands;” and, accordingly, whilst the Roman empire was at the height of prosperity, and had so entirely subjugated its enemies as to have established universal peace, even then was Jesus of Nazareth born of the Virgin Mary; (Luke ii.) and thus was accomplished the prophecy of Daniel, 603 years after it had been delivered!† But where are now those mighty empires which, in conformity with Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, were successively victorious? “Thou sawest,” said the young Jewish captive, “till that a stone was cut out without hands,

* See Isaiah xi. 9; Hab. ii. 14; Rev. xi. 15; and Note G.

† Note H.

which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors." These several kingdoms, extensive and potent as they were, have crumbled into dust; they have become like the "chaff" which the "wind carried away." The stone "smote the image upon his *feet*;" pagan Rome was "broken in pieces" by Christianity, which weathered every storm, surmounted every obstacle, passed unscathed through the fires of persecution, and, shortly after the conversion of Constantine the Great, an event that happened about the year 313, was adopted as the religion of the state, and its ordinances established on the ruins of idolatrous ceremonies.* We are now living in the nineteenth century, and the fifth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's vision—the kingdom of Christ—is still existing, and bearing witness to the truth of prophecy, "it shall never be destroyed." Infidelity has put forth its every energy. Physical, as well as mental, power has been exerted to the utmost.† But every effort against the religion of Christ has been made in vain. "Upon this rock," said the Saviour,

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, Cent. IV.

† See Note I.

speaking of, and probably pointing to, himself,*
“ Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matt. xvi. 18.) Thus the history of the past, and a knowledge of the present, are pledges to the believer in revelation, that he shall realize an accomplishment of every promise connected with the future; “ for all the promises of God in Christ, are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God.” (2 Cor. i. 20.)

It is interesting to observe that Josephus, who was born about the time of Christ—that is, whilst the Roman empire was dominant—follows Daniel in his interpretation of the dream as far as the establishment of the fourth kingdom, which he implies to be then existing; but refuses to offer any further explanation. Perhaps his silence originated from fear lest he should offend the government, by intimating its subversion; or he may have entertained a latent idea that the doctrines of Jesus, which were now gaining ground, would prove themselves to be identified with the kingdom of the stone. His words are: † “ Daniel did also declare the meaning of the stone to the king; but I do not think proper to relate it, since I have only undertaken to describe things past or things present, but not things that are future; yet if any one be so very desirous of

* Note K.

† Ant. B. x. chap. 10.

knowing truth, as not to waive such points of curiosity, and cannot curb his inclination for understanding the uncertainties of futurity, and whether they will happen or not, let him be diligent in reading the book of Daniel, which he will find among the sacred writings.”*

In concluding this Lecture, dear brethren, I will first shew how the Holy Spirit, in different parts of Scripture, employs the expression—a “stone,” or, a “rock,” to denote the Redeemer; and, then, briefly apply the subject to yourselves. The patriarch, Jacob, when, immediately before his death, prophesying of his own posterity, said, “From thence is the shepherd, the *stone* of Israel.” (Gen. xlix. 24.) This passage is interpreted by many ancient Jewish expositors as being parallel with the “stone cut out without hands,” which, say they, points to Messiah.† The Psalmist uses the same figure: “The *stone* which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.” (Psalm cxviii. 22.) You will remember this scripture is applied by our Saviour to himself, and is quoted in the same sense by the apostles. Isaiah predicted concerning the Lord Jesus: “He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a *stone* of stumbling, and for a *rock* of offence, to both the houses of Israel.” Again, “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a *stone*, a *tried stone*, a precious *corner stone*, a

* Note L.

† Note M.

sure foundation.” In the New Testament we frequently find the same words similarly used. Thus St. Paul: “Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*” And St. Peter: “Unto you, therefore, which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the *stone* which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a *stone* of stumbling and a *rock* of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient.”*

Yes! dear brethren, Christ is indeed precious to those who believe on him. He is “the chiefest among ten thousand; yea, he is altogether lovely.” Through the merit of his atoning blood we obtain the remission of our sins; for, “this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” He is our guide, our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, and our redemption.† O, if there is but one thoughtless sinner, who has been listening to this discourse, I conjure him to reflect upon the consequences of an unhallowed, or even a virtuous course, if the only Saviour is still denied his lawful enthronement within the

* Isaiah viii. 14; xxviii. 16. Eph. ii. 19, 20. 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8.

† 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 Cor. i. 30.

heart. "What is this then that is written," said Jesus, when reasoning with the disputing Jews, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." You are warned of the danger of impenitence and unbelief. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "How shall we escape, if we *neglect* so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 3; x. 31.) Pause in your career. Think upon *eternity*. Fear God. Linger not; for you know not what awaits you. This very night your soul may be required. Your disobedience manifests your folly. We invite you to draw near to the fountain of "living waters," and to participate in those joys which are pure and perennial. The gospel of Jesus Christ diffuses happiness and contentment wherever its gracious truths are appreciated. The nativity of our Lord was announced with the accompanying song of the angelic host: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." And, when the blessed Saviour was about to suffer for our guilt, he failed not to cheer his sorrowing disciples with the promise of never-failing consolation: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (Luke ii. 14; and John xiv. 27.)

LECTURE IV.

DANIEL, III. 25.

“ He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt ; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.”

IN the contemplation of the human character, we are continually reminded of its vacillating nature, and may see at once the merciful tendency of the divine injunction, “ Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein is he to be accounted of ? ” (Isaiah ii. 22.) It is, indeed, the undoubted experience of every age, that there is no certain dependance whilst leaning on an “ arm of flesh.” There is always the liability of being deceived, except when resting our hopes upon the “ rock that is higher than ” ourselves, and seeking our happiness in the promises of Jehovah. Here, alone, is perfect safety. The word of God is as immutable as himself. But the inhabitants of this world, divested of that

moral image of the Creator with which the human soul was at first impressed, are fickle in their purposes, and inconstant in their resolutions. The winds which are ever veering, and the sands which are ever shifting, are apt representatives of our fallen race, when considered with respect to our promises and designs. This is a humiliating doctrine. Yet, alas! it is neither supposititious nor unfounded. There is an unquestionable difference between those who are entirely uninfluenced by religion, and the reflecting portion of the community. With the ungodly, also, as well as among the pious, there are different shades of character. But still, whatever may be the excellencies and stability of individuals, a more general and extended view of the human family leads us to the conclusion that the heart is deceitful, and the mind disposed to constant mutation. (Jer. xvii. 9.) The Holy Scriptures abound with examples. Witness the case of Pharaoh, at one time promising emancipation to the Israelites, and then immediately refusing it. The Israelites themselves were always halting between two opinions. Saul did not cease from persecuting David, although he was pledged to his son Jonathan, having said, "As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain;" (1 Sam. xix. 6; xxiv. 17—19.) and had freely acknowledged that the object of his jealousy was more righteous than himself. Not to mul-

tiply quotations, you may remember the grievous deviations, even of David, how earnest he was in his vows of fidelity to God, and how often he disregarded them; how friendship was apparently shewn to the Hittite, whilst he was being secretly injured and betrayed! (Psalm cxxxii; 2 Sam. xi.)

These preliminary thoughts were suggested by the consideration of Nebuchadnezzar's change of sentiment. At the close of the preceding chapter we find the king of Babylon convinced, from the wonderful exposition of his dream, that Jehovah, the God of Israel, ought to be the object of our devotion. "The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is that your God is a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret." Immediately after this declaration, so voluntarily made, and so condemnatory of polytheism, he promoted the Jewish prophet, and his three companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; placing Daniel "ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon;" and the others in an important, though subordinate station.

The very next account we possess of the transactions in this reign, with which the third chapter of Daniel opens, is as follows: "Nebuchadnezzar, the king, made an image of gold, whose height

was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof six cubits: he set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon." It is uncertain in what year this event occurred. Some critics imagine that the mental derangement of Nebuchadnezzar, mentioned in the following chapter, happened *before* the idolatrous proceeding, and consequently suppose the golden image to have been constructed only a short time previous to his dissolution, or 562 years before Christ.* There does not appear to be any foundation for this conjecture. The Greek version† of Daniel places it in the eighteenth year of the king's reign, that is, twenty-five years before his death, or 587 years before Christ;‡ and, although there is no date specified in the original text, it may fairly be concluded, that the author of this translation had good authority for inserting the additional words. Dr. Prideaux adopts this era without hesitation, and remarks, "it could, in no year of that king's reign, fall more likely." Josephus also assigns it a date antecedent to the king's madness.§

It is probable that Nebuchadnezzar having, at this period, completely subjugated the Jews,

* See Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary in loco.

† *ΕΤΟΥΣ ὀκτωκαιδεκάτου Ναβουχοδονοσορ ὁ βασιλεὺς.
LXX.

‡ Prideaux, anno 587.

§ Ant. B. x. ch. 10. See also Note A.

and enriched himself with their treasures, now devoted some of his spoils to the formation of this golden image, which, perhaps, he may have designed, not so much as an evidence of his own partiality for idolatrous worship, as a proof of his contempt for the God of Israel, whose temple he had destroyed, and whose people he had vanquished. The size of the statue was immense. Its height was threescore cubits, which, as an ordinary cubit equalled half a yard, amounted to thirty yards, or ninety feet. The breadth was six cubits, or nine feet.* The precise form cannot be determined. Probably it was that of a man, and, as some suppose, was modelled after the figure represented to the king in his dream, with this variation, that, whereas the one was composed of different metals; the other, now being fashioned, was either entirely of gold, or else the *external case* (for so may we understand the passage) consisted of this precious material. On account of the great disproportion between the height and the breadth, the measurement being ninety feet by nine, it is conjectured that, in this description, the *pedestal* is included. Diodorus Siculus, a heathen historian, relates that, amongst the images found in the temple of Belus, when Xerxes plundered its enormous wealth, there was one discovered forty feet high;

* See Note B.

and this is supposed by Prideaux to have been the same as here mentioned by Daniel.*

When the statue was finished, it was located in the “plain of Dura;” a spot that cannot be defined, but which, most likely, was not far from the city. “The Jews have a notion that this place was the valley in the land of Shinar, where the tower of Babel was built.”† The decree now went forth from Nebuchadnezzar—yes, from that very prince who had so recently acknowledged the supremacy of Jehovah, who had been favoured with the clearest demonstration of the omniscience of Israel’s God, that all who were in authority in his province should be “gathered together unto the dedication of the image Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar, the king, hath set up: and whoso falleth not down and worshippeth, shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” Such was the edict of this heathen tyrant. Would that there was nothing analogous in the history of those christian potentates who, in the dark ages, were “lords over God’s heritage,” and whose

* Note C.

† Dr. Gill in loco.

tender mercies were but the refinements of cruelty !*

This idolatrous ceremony was as willingly performed on the part of the ignorant heathen as it was impiously commanded by the haughty king.† When the instruments sounded the people were prostrated in adoration of the idol.‡ But in the midst of surrounding darkness there dwelt the light of truth. Jehovah had his faithful witnesses in Babylon, who were not only the favoured recipients of true religious knowledge, but also regulated their conduct according to the degree of wisdom imparted to them, and were so far consistent in the cause of God as not to dishonour their profession by sacrificing their principles at the shrine of expediency. Such men are sure to be the objects of jealousy and hatred. Virtue and piety, although lovely in themselves, and conducive to happiness wherever they are appreciated, engender hostility in the minds of a reprobate people ; because the deeds of darkness are detected and condemned by the irradiations of moral worth.§ When our Saviour remarked, “ Think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her

* See Note D.

† Note E.

‡ See Isaiah xliv.

§ John iii. 20.

mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household :” (Matt. x. 34—36.)—the awful truth which he then revealed was, not that himself was the enemy of man (his every action denied the supposition—the blessed Jesus is the “ Prince of Peace,” the friend of sinners, the promised Saviour of the world, who cheerfully left the habitation of his Father's glory, sympathized with suffering humanity, and ransomed us from eternal woe,) but that the heavenly doctrines he inculcated would be so opposed to the natural disposition of the unregenerate heart as to beget a feeling of animosity towards those who cherished and entertained them. This divine prediction has been abundantly verified since it was delivered; and doubtless this spirit of rancour on the part of the ungodly has been displayed in every age of the world. The first recorded instance is that of Cain, who slew his brother Abel. “ And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.” (1 John iii. 12.)

The Jewish captives having been preferred in the kingdom of Babylon on account of their excellence, were the marked objects of Chaldean hatred. It was more than these Pagans could endure, not only to have their actions reflected upon by the consistent lives of the foreigners, but also to witness their advancement to posts of

honour in the realm. "Wherefore," as we read, "at that time certain Chaldeans came near, and accused the Jews. They spake, and said to the king Nebuchadnezzar, O king, live for ever. . . There are certain Jews, whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego; these men, O king, have not regarded thee; they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Here was an honourable testimony to the soundness of their faith. In the midst of idolatry they refused to serve idols. The king was hereby enraged, and, uninfluenced alike by a sense of mercy or justice, offered them the only alternative, either to comply or perish: "If ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour* into the midst of a burning fiery furnace: and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?"

O the folly and presumption of mortals when left to the guidance of their own reason! Into what depths of absurdity will they not plunge when unenlightened by that wisdom which proceeds from above! "Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hand?" was the exclamation of this arrogant prince; who, with all his advantages of Chaldean science, had not as yet acquired from the light of nature that simple,

* See Note F.

though solemn, lesson, revealed in the Bible: “Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth.” (Isaiah xlv. 9.)

The conduct of the three Jews upon this occasion was admirable. They were courteous, but firm. They shewed a respectful demeanour to the king,* but did not forget that the commands of the creature cease to be binding when they militate against the laws of the Creator. “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” Here we have an example of confidence in the superintending providence of Jehovah worthy of imitation. These Jews knew that God was cognizant of their danger. They believed that, notwithstanding the near prospect of death, he was able to deliver them; and they were resolved rather to endure any torture than rebel against him on whom they were depending for their happiness.† Under similar circumstances many would have deemed

* See Matt. xxii. 21.

† See Isaiah xlix. 15, 16.

it *expedient* to have waived religious scruples, and have conformed to the imperial requirement. Persecution has often exposed the hollowness of bare profession. And alas! even in the present state of society, when evangelization no longer tolerates the arbitrary decree of tyrants, how many are there whose faith has failed, and whose religious hopes, like the fleeting shadow, have disappeared, when the firm and avowed maintenance of sound principle would have been attended by some temporary inconvenience, or subjected the unflinching upholder of truth to some momentary loss!

In the present instance it was vain to remonstrate. The fury of Nebuchadnezzar could not be restrained. He commanded that the furnace should be heated seven times more than was usual, and that these disobedient subjects should be cast into the midst. The three Jews were forthwith bound, probably together, and, habited in their ordinary dress—in their outer garments, their hose, or sandals, and their hats, or turbans—were seized by the most mighty men in the army, and committed to the burning of the fiery furnace. Through the intensity of the heat the men who carried these innocent martyrs—for such they were—to the mouth of the furnace, were destroyed by the flames. The Jews fell bound into the midst of the fire.*

* See Note G.

We have now arrived, dear brethren, at a most interesting conjuncture in the history before us. The king of Babylon, who perhaps was seated not far from the furnace, had his attention arrested by a circumstance which, as it seemed to him, was of an extraordinary character. "The king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Doubtless this appearance of four, instead of three men, must have been marvellous in the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar. The expression he employed is singular, as emanating from a heathen. "The form of the fourth," said he, "is like the Son of God." It is not necessary to conclude that the king, in using these words, had a distinct knowledge of the person whom he beheld. The clause may be translated, "like a son of the gods."* There was something in the similitude of the stranger evidently super-human, which therefore may have caused Nebuchadnezzar to regard him as divine. Or, he may have remembered his former confession of Jehovah, and have

* Dr. Adam Clarke.

considered this glorious being as an *angel* sent from the Most High. Indeed, he expressly states as much in his subsequent address to the rescued Jews: “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his *angel*, and delivered his servants that trusted in him.” The Greek version favours the supposition that the king here alluded to the Almighty God, and not to heathen deities; for the translator has rendered the passage as it stands in our English Bible, “The form of the fourth is like unto the Son of God.”*

It is difficult to identify the individual thus introduced in our text. Some suppose him to have been merely a created angel. This is the opinion of several of the Rabbies.† On the other hand, many of the ancient christian writers believed that this was a manifestation of the second person of the Trinity—The Logos, or Word of God, who was afterwards incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and known to us as the Lord Jesus Christ. Aben Ezra, a Jewish commentator, who lived in the 12th century, observes that this passage in Daniel, “Like unto the Son of God,” should be interpreted as denoting true filiation, and not sonship by adoption. Therefore, in the estimation of this author, a created angel is not

* Καὶ ἡ ὄρασις τοῦ τετάρτου ὁμοία υἱῷ Θεοῦ.—LXX.

† See Dr. Gill in loco.

here intended; but rather the “Angel of the Covenant”—the true and eternal Son of God.*

As I am inclined to think that the Deity was present with his afflicted captives in the furnace, literally fulfilling his own gracious promise: “When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou *walkest through the fire* thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee;” (Isaiah xliii. 2.) I will proceed to shew that the second person in the Trinity was wont to appear in human form to the ancients, and that the Jews themselves were of this opinion. It is too common a practice not to recognise Christ in all parts of the Holy Scriptures, forgetful that the Old, as well as the New Testament, brings him prominently into view; not only in the prophecies which foretold his advent, and in the sacrifices which adumbrated his vicarious atonement, but likewise as visibly appearing to his saints, and personally instructing and comforting his church. Not until the incarnation, indeed, did Christ become very man. It was *then* that the mystery was accomplished—“God was manifested in the flesh”—not by conversion of the godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God:†

* See Note H.

† 1 Tim. iii. 16; and Athanasian Creed.

but the point I desire to impress on you is, that before the birth of the infant Jesus, the Almighty, co-equal, and co-eternal Son of God, visited this world in the likeness of man, and conversed with its inhabitants.

The opening sentence of the Bible implies a plurality of persons in the godhead. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" wherein, be it observed, the substantive, "*God*," in the Hebrew, is in the *plural*, and therefore would literally be rendered "*Gods*." Here, then, is signified a plurality of persons engaged in the creation of the world. But the verb "*created*," is in the *singular*. This is a most remarkable construction—a *plural noun* conjoined with a *singular verb*. In no other language but the Hebrew does this anomaly occur.* The legitimate inference from the fact is, that although there is a plurality of persons in the Divinity, yet the Supreme Being is one undivided Jehovah. "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD." (Deut. vi. 4.) The gospel of St. John removes all uncertainty, as it teaches us that Christ was united with the Father in the formation of the universe: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was, in the beginning, with God. All things were made by

* See Note I.

him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” *

That our first parents conversed with their Maker is well known ; and it will appear, from an attentive consideration of the history relative to their expulsion from Paradise, that the Almighty then presented himself in a visible manner. “They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day : and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden.” (Gen. iii. 8.) These words imply that the Deity assumed a material form. The Lord God *walked* in the garden. Adam and Eve, knowing they had transgressed, sought concealment among the trees. Can we suppose that the delinquents would have endeavoured to screen themselves from the piercing eye of the omniscient, (Psalm cxxxix. 7—12.) by taking refuge beneath the adjacent foliage, unless they had been accustomed to behold God in the likeness of corporeity?† The Jews have commented upon this scripture ; and some of their writers have distinctly maintained the supposition of a personal appearance being here represented.‡

* John i. 1. See also Col. i. 16 ; and Heb. i. 2.

† See Mr. Oxlee’s valuable work on the Trinity and Incarnation, vol. ii. ch. 3.

‡ See Note K.

In the 18th chapter of Genesis we have a still clearer proof of our argument. The Almighty is there said to have appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre. The patriarch "lift up his eyes, and looked, and, lo, *three men* stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant." These three strangers were in the form of men. But it is positively declared, in the first verse, "Jehovah appeared." Throughout the remaining part of the chapter we find that one of these persons is described as the Lord conversing with Abraham. In the 20th verse, it is said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether, according to the cry of it, which is come unto me." Afterwards we read: "The men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom; *but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.*" It is evident, then, that one of the three angels who came to the Patriarch on this occasion, was the "angel of the covenant," or Jehovah. The other *two* went down to the devoted city, as is determined by the following chapter: "There came *two* angels to Sodom at even." The *third* remained behind. The divine Redeemer tarried with his faithful

servant. Hence it was subsequently written : “ Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.” (John viii. 58.) Onkelos,* the Targumist, who is supposed to have been contemporary with our Saviour, thus paraphrases the words with which Abraham addressed one of the three visitants : “ O Jehovah, if now I have found mercy in thy presence, do not, I pray, pass from thy servant.”† The Targum of Jonathan‡ is to the same effect : “ I entreat thee, by thy mercies, O Jehovah, if now I have found favour before thee ; do not, I pray, cause to depart the glory of thy habitation from thy servant, until I shall have collected the provisions under the tree.”§

Other striking passages might be adduced from Rabbinical authors bearing upon this subject, and other similar manifestations of the divine presence might be selected from the Old Testament,|| if the limit of a discourse would admit of the citations. Let one more instance suffice. R. Moses Gerundensis comments upon the appearance of God in the burning bush, and observes, that the “ angel of the Lord,” there mentioned, is the Metatron, that is, the Logos, or second person in the Godhead. His words are,

* See Note L.

† Quoted by Oxlee.

‡ Note M.

§ Oxlee, vol. ii, ch. 3. See also Note N.

|| Note O.

“ Nothing, indeed, can be more true, than that the angel here mentioned, was the redeeming angel; of whom it is said, *For my name is in him*: the same who said unto Jacob, *I am the God of Bethel*; and of whom it is here said, *And God called unto him* The same is he of whom it is said; *But God shall suddenly come to his temple, the Lord whom ye seek, and the angel of the covenant, in whom ye delight.*” In another part of his writings he thus speaks: “ In truth, this angel, in whom we are here made to confide, is the angel of redemption; in the midst of whom is the great name Jehovah; for in Jah Jehovah is a rock of ages. . . . Moreover, our Fathers affirm, that he is the Metatron; a name signifying the director of the road.” *

After what has been now advanced, we shall have no difficulty in believing that Jesus Christ appeared upon this earth previous to his incarnation; and, with this conviction, we may fairly presume that it was the Eternal Son of God who accompanied his faithful people, while walking in the fiery furnace. Be this, however, as it may, the fidelity and true piety of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were amply rewarded. The Almighty God manifested both his power and his love in the preservation of his children.

* Cited by Oxlee, vol. i. ch. 8. See also Note P.

Not even their garments were burned. They were brought forth in perfect safety, and, as we may conclude, in perfect peace; affording a beautiful commentary upon the promise: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." How triumphantly may every believer unite with the apostle in his inquiry, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Prov. xvi. 7; and Romans viii. 31.) It appears from the history that, as soon as the king perceived the interposition of almighty power, and discovered the presence of an angelic visitant, he was convinced at once of his own impiety and acknowledged the innocence of his captives. "Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego came forth of the midst of the fire. And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and

have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill; because there is no other god that can deliver after this sort. Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon."*

Thus has our attention been drawn to a remarkable instance of the feebleness of man. How impotent are the efforts of the creature, when exerted in defiance of the Creator! Often have the words of the Psalmist been verified; but, perhaps, never more strikingly than in the case now before us: "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." (Psalm lxxvi. 10.) Confidence in the immutable promises of Jehovah is an invaluable possession. It secures us against unnecessary alarms, enables us to pursue the path of duty with an unfaltering step, and nerves the mind to encounter difficulties, and brave opposing dangers. The benediction of St. Paul is probably more significant than it appears to the casual reader: "Now the God of hope fill you

* See Note Q.

with *all joy and peace in believing*, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xv. 13.) Inestimable, indeed, are the privileges of the sincere believer. "For the Lord's portion is his people; . . . he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." (Deut. xxxii. 9.) O that each of you, dear brethren, may fully realize the consolations of true religion, always directing your thoughts to Jesus Christ, "casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you," believing habitually in the presence of your divine Redeemer, who sympathizes with you in your sorrows, and is ready to deliver you in the hour of your distress. "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." (Isaiah xlix. 13—15.)

LECTURE V.

DANIEL, IV. 27.

“ Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor ; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.”

It is a characteristic feature in the history of God's faithful people, that having themselves experienced the true blessedness of the divine favour, they are ever desirous to impress upon a benighted world the evil consequence of a wicked course, and are anxious to lead the thoughtless multitude from their wanderings, into the paths of security and peace. The Scriptures afford many instances of zeal in the efforts of devout men, to turn sinners from “ darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” He who is not solicitous for the souls of others, can scarcely be supposed to feel interested about his own. He, who withholds the friendly admonition from an erring brother, when it can be seasonably given, knows not, as he ought, or does not

sufficiently consider, the dreadful situation of the ungodly. The soul, when once aroused from its lethargy, becomes alarmed, and ponders over the words which are written: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 31.) The bare thought of *eternity* is pregnant with the most solemn matter for reflection. But the human mind is prone to feed upon such things as can be viewed with the eye of sense, and therefore eternal objects, being spiritual in their nature, and only within the reach of the eye of faith, are discarded from its contemplation; or if—despite every endeavour to stifle the voice of conscience, which will at times warn and instruct even the most profligate—eternity should force itself upon the attention and demand an inquiry into the consequences it involves, yet is the awful theme distasteful to the intellectual palate, and is no sooner conceived than it is averted and dismissed. Hence the multitude are pursuing a devious track, chalking out for themselves pathways which are not good, entangling themselves with the frivolities of this transitory scene, spending their substance in the acquirement of unprofitable possessions, rivetting their affections upon the pleasures of an uncertain world, and in the blindness of their hearts, bartering the transcendant joys of heaven for the unutterable torments of hell! Hence, also, there is so little

anxiety manifested in behalf of the unconverted. The wicked are countenanced and encouraged by the *prevalence* of sin. The divine precept, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil," (Ex. xxiii. 2,) is reversed; and the proverb of Solomon, "Fools make a mock at sin," (Prov. xiv. 9,) is verified every hour. There is a fearful indifference pervading society on this momentous point. So long as individuals deport themselves with outward decency, and do not violate those laws which would subject them to the vengeance of an earthly tribunal, no matter how loose their principles, how grovelling their ideas, how steeled their hearts may be against the admission of religious influence—no matter that their *souls* are unpardoned, unsanctified, unprepared for the "*judgment seat of Christ*," they encounter no opposition from the frowns of the world, and receive neither warning nor advice from the lips of those amongst whom they live. They are of the world, and therefore the world loveth them. (John xv. 19; 2 Cor. v. 10.)

The man, however, who fears God, is ever desirous to extend the knowledge which he himself enjoys. The light he has received from the "Sun of Righteousness," he would cheerfully impart to others; even as the satellite of this earth, though itself illumined from a foreign source, refuses not to comfort with a borrowed radiance the inhabitants of an attendant orb.

The believer in Jesus, rejoicing in the prospect of eternal peace, and feeling that there is no substantial happiness apart from true piety, makes it at once his anxiety and delight to proclaim those unsearchable riches of Christ, which impart so much consolation to the soul. If it becomes necessary, he will reprove; but his admonitions will be accompanied with meekness. Although studious not to offend, by unseasonable or harsh animadversions, yet will he never purposely withhold, through the fear of a fellow mortal, the friendly rebuke or exhortation, when it may be opportunely given. Love will constrain each true disciple to seek the increase of his Master's kingdom.* He will remember the divine aphorism, "A word spoken in due season, how good is it?" (Prov. xv. 23;) but if, through want of confidence in his own ability, or owing to any unpropitious circumstance, he does not venture, with his lips, to expose the danger which threatens the unconverted sinner, yet will it be his constant aim and his daily prayer, that he may "let his light so shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 16.) Thus every child of the Redeemer, however humble his condition, however deficient his education, may preach the doctrines of the gospel, and be

* See Luke xxii. 32; and 2 Tim. ii. 24—26.

instrumental in gathering some wandering and benighted sheep into the Saviour's fold. As the splendour of the vaulted heaven proclaims the existence of Deity ; as the beauteous order of the universe attests the continual presence, and superintendence, of the First Great Cause ; and as the sublimity of this language is enhanced, rather than deteriorated, by the profound silence of the voice of nature, even so is the consistent life of a Christian, though he should speak neither of his faith nor of his hopes, a proof of the indwelling of the Spirit, and a demonstration of the power of the gospel. "The heavens declare the glory of God : and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. *There is no speech nor language ; their voice is not heard.*"* (Psalm xix. 1—3.) The genuine believer is an "epistle known and read of all men." (2 Cor. iii. 2.) Whoever watches his conduct, and observes the rectitude of his mind, and the sanctity of his life, his humility, confidence, and joy, must, indeed, discover that he has held communion with Jesus, who alone could thus enlighten, strengthen, and comfort him ; and through whom alone he could have been guided into the paths of holiness and peace.

* See Note A.

The words which I have chosen for the basis of our present Lecture exemplify the observations that have been advanced. Daniel evinced a desire to save his earthly sovereign from his impending doom, and, now that an opportunity was presented, did not shrink from reminding him of his sins. "Wherefore, O king," said he, after having explained the meaning of the dream, "let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity." (See Acts viii. 22.)

Let us now proceed to inquire into the circumstance which gave rise to the above admonition. In order that we may obtain a distinct view of our subject, we must understand that the entire chapter, now before us, is a decree issued by Nebuchadnezzar, in which he narrates, for the instruction of his people, a remarkable dream, accompanied with its interpretation and fulfilment. It is written in the Chaldean language, and probably was taken from the public records by Daniel, who inserted a verbatim copy in the book of his prophecies, for the edification of the church. This edict was given by the king in the forty-second year of his reign, the same in which he was restored to his health; corresponding with the year 563 before Christ.*

* Prideaux.

The motive which prompted him to make this public acknowledgment of his degradation seems to have originated from a sincere desire to warn his fellow creatures of the consequences of pride, and to induce them to cherish a reverential fear of the Creator.

The decree thus commences: "Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; peace be multiplied unto you. I thought it good to shew the signs and wonders that the high God hath wrought toward me. How great are his signs! and how mighty are his wonders! his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation."* In these words the Babylonian monarch appears to address, not only the inhabitants of his own country, but also every distant nation that bowed to his authority. The occurrence he was about to disclose was interesting to all men; and therefore, as far as was practicable, he would have none remain ignorant of its import. The punishment he had suffered left a serious impression upon his mind. He would now encourage the universal adoration of Jehovah, and no longer countenance the vain worship of a "golden image." He had experienced the bitterness of offending his Maker, and would now

* See Note B.

endeavour to rescue others from a like calamity.

After this introductory confession of the sovereignty of God, he proceeds to relate the event which happened:—"I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in mine house, and flourishing in my palace: I saw a dream which made me afraid, and the thoughts upon my bed and the visions of my head troubled me." These verses refer to a period eight years antecedent to the issuing of the present edict,* when peace was established after the victory of Nebuchadnezzar over the Egyptians.† In this sense, the king was at rest, and flourishing in his palace. All his enemies appear to have been subdued, and the Babylonian dynasty to have attained the summit of prosperity. Although the visions of this dream were not obliterated from his memory, as in the former instance, (chap. ii.) yet here also, as before, the signification of it was unknown, and the mind of the prince became distressed. The magicians, and others of similar calling, were summoned into the royal presence; but, not being competent to afford the required explanation, they were again superseded by Daniel, to whom the agitated monarch made the following communication: "O Belteshazzar, master of the magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the

* See Note C.

† Prideaux.

holy Gods is in thee, and no secret troubleth thee, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and the interpretation thereof. Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed : I saw, and behold, a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth. The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all : the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven. He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit : let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field ; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth : let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him ; and let seven times pass over him. This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones ; to the intent that the living may

know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." Such was the nature of Nebuchadnezzar's second dream; the interpretation of which was demanded from Daniel. The prophet was astonished for the space of an hour, and "his thoughts troubled him," not that he was incapable, like the Chaldean soothsayers, of complying with the request of his sovereign, but because he too clearly perceived the misfortune that was portended, and was grieved in anticipation of the event which he was commissioned to reveal. "My Lord," said he, "the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies. The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong, whose height reached unto the heaven, and the sight thereof to all the earth; whose leaves were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all; under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and upon whose branches the fowls of the heaven had their habitation: it is thou, O king, that art grown and become strong: for thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth. And whereas the king saw a watcher and an holy one coming down from heaven, and saying, Hew the tree down, and destroy it; yet leave the stump of the roots thereof in the earth, even with a band of iron

and brass, in the tender grass of the field ; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him. This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which is come upon my lord the king : That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots ; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.”

The prophet has himself so clearly explained the meaning of this vision, that it requires but little further elucidation. It pleased the Almighty, who is the disposer of all events, who manifests his presence in various ways, and communicates his intentions to whomsoever he chooses, to make known to Nebuchadnezzar, through the medium of a dream, the calamity which would befall him, as the punishment of his pride. This intelligence is conveyed under the similitude of an immense tree,—an apt representation of the Babylonian prince. The same figure is often used in Scripture to denote

great men, whether wicked or pious. The Psalmist, speaking of the prosperity which attends the righteous, makes the following comparison: "He shall be like a *tree* planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psalm i. 3.) Again, David thus portrays the momentary success of the ungodly: "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a *green bay tree*." (Psalm xxxvii. 35.) And Ezekiel employs the same emblem as typical of the Assyrian monarch, who reigned at Nineveh, in the midst of great pomp and splendour. "Behold, the Assyrian was a *cedar* in Lebanon, with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. . . . All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations." (Ezek. xxxi. 3—6.) So also in the case now before us: "The tree that thou sawest, which grew, and was strong. . . . it is thou, O king, that art grown, and become strong." The birds which lodged in the boughs, and the beasts which were sheltered beneath its leaves, represented his courtiers and dependants, both at home and abroad. The tree was situated in the "midst of the earth,"

as denoting that its antitype had extended his conquests on every side ; and the sight thereof reached “ unto the end of all the earth,” as implying that even the most distant nation was cognizant of his renown.

This is strong language to apply to an earthly monarch, but its peculiar and appropriate force is evident to those who are acquainted with the history of Nebuchadnezzar. He was an instrument in the hands of God to punish the Jews for their idolatry, and to chastise the neighbouring people for their intolerable pride and wickedness. Many of the prophets foretold that Nineveh should be subverted. Jonah was commissioned to preach repentance to the guilty inhabitants, and, as they hearkened to the voice of admonition, they were spared. But they relapsed into their sinful practices ; and the destruction of their city, succeeded by the perpetual overthrow of the Assyrian kingdom, was the appointed retribution. Nahum thus predicted : “ It shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste : who will bemoan her ? whence shall I seek comforters for thee ? ” (Nahum iii. 7 ; see ver. 18, 19.) The same catastrophe was foreshewn by Zephaniah : “ He will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria ; and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness. . . . This is

the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly; that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me: how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand." (Zeph. ii. 13—15.) Now we learn from history that these, and other prophecies bearing upon the same point, were literally fulfilled; and that the instruments employed were the Medes and Babylonians.* Hence the fall of Nineveh—that great city which, according to Jonah, would occupy three days in walking round it, and wherein were "more than six score thousand persons that could not discern between their right hand and their left;" (Jonah iii. 3; iv. 11,) that city which, on the authority of Diodorus Siculus, was sixty miles in circumference, whose surrounding wall was a hundred feet high, and so broad as to admit upon it three chariots abreast,—circumstances betokening the command of great resources—must have increased the wealth and the power of the Babylonian empire.

Another ancient city that obtained celebrity, was Tyre, called by Isaiah the "daughter of Zidon," because founded by the Zidonians, who fled, after having been conquered by the Philistines.† The Tyrians became a mighty and wealthy people, through the extent of their

* See Note D.

† See Note E.

trade. Their “merchants” are styled “princes,” and their “traffickers” the “honourable of the earth.” (Isaiah xxiii.) But here also pride was the result of prosperity; and degradation was the consequence of pride. The word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel, saying, “Son of man, say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God, Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, in the midst of the seas; . . . behold, therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness.” (Ezek. xxviii.) The same prophet, in a preceding chapter, mentions the very person who was to be engaged in this work: “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field; and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee. . . . And they shall make a spoil of thy riches, and make a prey of thy merchandize; . . . and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust, in the midst of the water.” (ch. xxvi.) Thus far the Scripture concerning the impending desolation of Tyre. From the same authority we learn that the prediction

was accomplished. God himself has declared the fact: "Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled." (Ezek. xxix. 18.) Josephus,* quoting from Philostratus, who wrote an account of India and Phenicia, informs us that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre, whilst Ithobal was king, and was thirteen years before he subdued it. This severe and long-continued struggle, mentioned by the above profane historian, is the circumstance intended in the citation from Ezekiel—"every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled." The place was however at length taken; and the king of Babylon again achieved a victory, which extended his authority, if it did not augment his treasures.† It is worthy of remark that, when the Tyrians perceived the hopeless condition to which they were reduced, they embarked their property, and, migrating to the neighbouring islands, left behind only an impoverished city, to be occupied by the invading troops.‡ Hence we may discover what was signified by these words of the Almighty: "Yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: therefore thus

* See Note F.

† See Note G.

‡ Note H.

saith the Lord God, Behold I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xxix. 18—20.) This is an interesting portion of Scripture. It teaches us how the Lord brings down the lofty looks of man—how he levels the greatest cities with the dust—how certainly the wickedness of a nation involves its misery—how the divine chastisements are inflicted by secondary causes—how the mere creature is chosen to bring about the purposes of heaven—and how every individual, even though he should not be actuated by religious motives, receives a reward proportionate to his labour, when hired in the service of the Almighty. The king of Babylon was sent to punish the Tyrians for their pride. Neither he, nor his army, were compensated for the arduous undertaking, on account of the above-mentioned circumstance; and therefore, as he was employed to execute the work of God, although he was unconscious of the fact, the riches of Egypt were assigned to him. And if, dear brethren, the man, who unwittingly complies with the wishes of his Maker, is thus recompensed with earthly treasures, how much more shall every

spiritual blessing descend on those who cheerfully take up the cross of Christ, and, despite the combined opposition of the world, the flesh, and the devil, accomplish the will of the divine Saviour, by diligently walking in the way of his commandments! * (See 1 Tim. iv. 8.)

The chief object in adducing these predictions concerning Nineveh, Tyre, and Egypt, is to shew how significant is the emblem of the tree, and with what propriety it was interpreted of Nebuchadnezzar—"thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth." In a former Lecture, we dwelt upon the destruction of Jerusalem, wherein it appeared that Babylon was greatly enriched by the subversion of the Jewish polity; and we have now seen how other nations also were compelled to augment the grandeur of this mighty conqueror. Ancient writers agree that this prince was pre-eminently renowned, and that his dominions were most extensive.† Through the abundance of his wealth, he so beautified his own city as to excite the admiration of the world. But man cannot be trusted in prosperity; for he then forgets that almighty Being from whom he derives the strength, either of body or mind, which

* See Prideaux, anno 573; and Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, Dissertation xi.

† Josephus against Apion, B. i. Sect. 20, which see.

enables him to pursue his operations with success. (See Deut. vi. 10—12.)

To return to the vision:—Nebuchadnezzar, after the tree had been presented to him in his dream, beheld a “watcher and an holy one” coming down from heaven, who cried aloud, “Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, let the beasts get away from under it. . . . Nevertheless, leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: let his heart be changed from man’s, and let a beast’s heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.” The pride of the king was to be abased. He perceived two angels,* here called a “watcher” and “an holy one,” as denoting, perhaps, that they were of different orders, proceeding from God with a peremptory command that the tree should be reduced to a stump. Angels are the appointed ministers of the Most High, and are always ready to fulfil his purposes, whether of judgment or mercy.† Daniel faithfully informed the king concerning the *application* of the dream: “They shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; and seven times,”

* See Dr. Gill in loco; and Note I.

† See Isaiah xxxvii. 36; Psalm ciii. 20, 21; and Heb. i. 14.

that is, seven years,* “ shall pass over thee, till thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And whereas they commanded to leave the stump of the tree roots; thy kingdom shall be sure unto thee, after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule.” Then follows the injunction of our text, so seasonably given to this elated and wicked monarch: “ Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity.”

Nebuchadnezzar saw this vision in the 35th year of his reign, or eight years previous to the publication of the present decree. The edict proceeds to relate: “ All this came upon the king Nebuchadnezzar. At the end of twelve-months he walked in,” or as the margin renders it, “ upon the palace of the kingdom of Babylon.” The houses in eastern countries have frequently flat roofs, whereon the inhabitants are accustomed to walk. To the roof of his palace,† it is supposed, the king had repaired; whence having a commanding view of the city, with its magnificent temple, and the several costly improvements he himself had made, and having perhaps forgotten his dream, or disbelieved the

* See Note K.

† See Note L. and Acts x. 9.

prophet's interpretation, in consequence of a twelvemonth having elapsed, he broke forth into the following strain of exultation: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" This was a sinful display of extreme vanity, which was immediately followed by his punishment. "While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee: and they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee."* Thus did a voice from heaven confirm the sentence foreshewn by the prophet; and the king himself, in his decree, informs us that the predicted calamity was accomplished. "The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws.' Even whilst he was in the act of boasting, he was afflicted with madness; probably with that species of the disease called lycanthropy, inducing within his disordered mind the conviction

* See Acts xii. 22, 23.

that he was no longer a man, but a brute.* Being now in a state of frenzy, rendered incompetent to manage his affairs, and disqualified for the society of his fellows, he was driven from the palace; and, as he was left to follow his own inclinations—for heathen communities, uninfluenced by the philanthropic spirit engendered by the gospel, are not wont to bestow their anxiety upon the sick, or to alleviate the suffering of the distressed†—he betook himself to the fields within the walls of the city.‡

The gospel history affords an instance of an insane person somewhat analagous to the case before us. When the Saviour had descended from the ship which had borne him to the country of the Gadarenes, “immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.” (Mark v. 2—5.)

When the king of Babylon was banished from his home, he may have been secured from doing

* See Note M.

† Note N.

‡ Note O.

harm, as signified in the words: “leave the stump of his roots in the earth, *even with a band of iron and brass.*” As he could no longer afford protection to his dependants, they forsook him; “the beasts got away from under him, and the fowls from his branches.” During the seven years of his madness, the government being administered in his behalf, no successor was appointed to the throne; for the prophet had probably informed the people that their lawful monarch would be restored: and accordingly, at the expiration of the appointed time, it pleased the Almighty to fulfil the remainder of the prediction. Though the tree was cut down, the stump remained, as typical of the promised restitution. “At the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven,” that is, in prayer,* “and mine understanding returned unto me; and I blessed the Most High; and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the

* See Note P.

glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

This merciful termination of his punishment occurred, as before remarked, in the forty-second year of his reign, whereupon he immediately issued the above decree. He only survived about another year; and consequently died 562 years before the birth of Christ.* We possess no further account of this extraordinary man. When we consider his ascription of praise to the Deity, the confession of his own insignificance, the candour and frankness with which he voluntarily published his edict, and the ingenuous disclosure of the admonition and rebuke of Daniel, proclaimed in the face of all his subjects, and which only could have resulted from profound humility and much self-abasement, we cannot but entertain the hope that the Spirit of God was with him, and that, however great may have been his previous wickedness, he found acceptance and departed in peace with his Creator. "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and

* See Note Q.

the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." (Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2.)* But, unbounded as is the compassion of God, let no individual continue in sin, on the presumption that divine favour will be extended to him. The voice which summons the immortal spirit from the confines of mortality may be heard at a moment when least expected. The history of Nebuchadnezzar should be an example to all, and especially to princes. Nations might glean a wholesome lesson from the narrative we have reviewed; and each inhabitant of the earth may learn wisdom, as he reflects upon the occurrence here recorded. "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke xviii. 14.)

* See Note R.

LECTURE VI.

DANIEL, v. 30.

“In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain.”

THE event, which forms the subject of our present chapter, occurred at a period several years later than the death of Nebuchadnezzar; for, after his decease, his son Merodach (called Evil, or, literally, foolish-Merodach, in consequence of his wickedness) reigned in his stead. One of the first acts of this new king was to liberate Jehoiachin, the captive sovereign of Judea, who had now been incarcerated for the space of more than six and thirty years.* “Jerome tells us, from an ancient tradition of the Jews, that Evilmerodach, having had the government of the Babylonish empire during his father’s distraction, administered it so ill, that, as soon as the old king came again to himself, he put him in prison for it; and that the place of his imprisonment happening to be the same where Jehoiachin had long lain, he there entered into a

* See 2 Kings xxv. 27; and Jer. lii. 31.

particular acquaintance and friendship with him; and that this was the cause of the great kindness which he afterwards shewed him."* He continued on the throne two years, when, his conduct being no longer endurable, his relations conspired and slew him; whereupon Neriglissar, the husband of his sister, took possession of the crown.

At this time Astyages, king of Media, died, and was succeeded by his son Cyaxares, the same individual as the Darius mentioned in connection with our text, and uncle to Cyrus, whose name is renowned, not only on account of the extent of his conquests, but because, in the providence of God, he was the appointed restorer of the people of Israel. The father of Cyrus was Cambyses, who, according to Herodotus, was a Persian nobleman, but, on the authority of Xenophon, preferred by Dr. Prideaux, he was *king* of Persia, although subject to the Medes.† His mother was Mandana, daughter of Astyages; and hence Darius, or Cyaxares, was his maternal uncle: and, as Persia and Media were thus connected by relationship existing between their respective sovereigns, so also were they confederate in their enterprises against their mutual enemies.

* Prideaux, anno 561.

† Cyropædia, b. 1. ch. 2; and Prideaux, anno 559.

As soon as Neriglissar was seated upon the throne of Babylon, he made preparations for a war against the Medes. In this emergency, they invited Cyrus to their assistance, who, having arrived with an army of thirty thousand Persians, was appointed, by his uncle, general of the combined forces. Three years were now employed by both parties in mustering their allies, and perfecting their arrangements; after which a dreadful conflict ensued, terminating in the victory of Cyrus, the death of Neriglissar, and the flight of the Chaldean troops.* Babylon, having obtained the height of its grandeur under the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, was now beginning to feel the instability of all human things, and to experience the consequences of her pride. Neriglissar reigned only four years, and was succeeded by his son, Laborosoarchod—a flagitious and cruel youth. His tyranny was so overbearing that two of his nobility, Gobrias and Gadates, revolted, and joined the army of Cyrus;† and, when nine months had elapsed, from the period of his accession, he was assassinated by his own people.‡

How truly painful, and yet how instructive, is the page of history! The narrative, handed down to us, of the transactions of by-gone days,

* Xenophon, *Cyropæd.* b. iii. iv.

† Ibid. b. iv. ch. 6; and Prideaux.

‡ See Note A.

affords irrefragable proof of the corruption of the human heart, shews how prone we are to abuse our delegated power, and points out the certainty with which punishment overtakes a tyrannous and delinquent course. What indeed constitutes the labour of an historian, but to connect a series of events, forming an almost unbroken concatenation of crime, degradation, and misery! The virtues portrayed are few and far between. And yet, notwithstanding all evidence to the contrary, some men deny the natural depravity of our race; which denial, as it appears to us, proceeds from no other reason than because our sinfulness is revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

The throne was now restored to the line of Nabolassar. Belshazzar,* the son of Evilmerodach, and therefore the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, succeeded the last-mentioned monarch, and assumed his present name in honour of his god, even as Daniel, for the same purpose, was called Belteshazzar. His character was impious,† and probably would have accelerated the overthrow of his kingdom, already on the decline, and threatened by the forces under Cyrus, had not his mother, Nitocris—a woman of strong intellect—mainly directed the affairs of government, whilst the reigning prince gave the

* See Note B.

† Jòsephus, Ant. b. x. ch. 11; and Cyropedia, b. vii. ch. 5.

bridle to his passions, and abandoned himself to the pursuit of pleasure.* However, no human art could prevail in favour of Babylon, for her destruction was decreed in the counsels of heaven. “God’s appointed time,” says Prideaux,† “for its fall approaching, it was beyond the power of any wisdom to prevent it.” The prophets of the Almighty had been commissioned to foretell its impending doom. Isaiah, about 200 years before the time of Belshazzar, whilst Assyria was progressively flourishing and the Medes were an inconsiderable people, gave the following prediction:‡ “Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. . . . And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.” (Isaiah xiii. 17. 19.) These words are only part of a remarkable denunciation which was executed to the letter. Here, the *nation* is mentioned by whom the threatened chastisement was to be inflicted. In another place, the same prophet foretells the *person*, more than a hundred years before his birth, who was pre-ordained the chief instrument in accomplishing this work: “Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to *Cyrus*, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue na-

* Herodotus, Clio.

† Anno, 555.

‡ See Note C.

tions before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, *which call thee by thy name*, am the God of Israel." (Isaiah xlv. 1—3.) The riches of Chaldea are here assigned to others by the voice of Him who has declared: "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Haggai ii. 8.) "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." (Ps. l. 10.) Of what avail, then, the efforts of Nitocris, however superior her understanding; and how impotent the means of defence, however great the skill employed! This far-famed city was now the object of attack. The Medes, in conjunction with the Persians, and under the command of Cyrus, were planning a scheme for its final overthrow.

Before we proceed to quote more largely from the prophecies, and detail more particularly the manner of their fulfilment, we will first give a description of Babylon, as transmitted to us in the works of Herodotus and others; and then offer some explanatory observations upon the whole chapter from which our text is taken.

The general opinion is that it was founded by Belus, supposed to be the same with the Nimrod, mentioned in our Scriptures; (Gen. x. 8—10.) although there are some who give this honour to Semiramis, queen of Assyria, and wife of Ninus.* If the former established the kingdom, the latter contributed to its augmentation and glory; and whoever was the founder, or under whatever government it was improved, the unanimous opinion is that, under Nebuchadnezzar, it attained the height of magnificence and prosperity. We have already seen how this monarch extended his conquests, and that his riches were multiplied at the expense of the surrounding nations.†

Some idea of the dimensions, strength, and wonders of this city may be interesting to our hearers. It was built in the form of a square, each of the four sides being fifteen miles in length, and consequently the entire wall with which it was encompassed measured sixty miles. This bulwark was 350 feet high, 87 feet wide, and built of large bricks cemented together by bitumen, a glutinous substance abounding in that country, and more binding and durable than lime. The approach was defended by a deep moat, lined with bricks on both sides, and filled with water; the depth of which may be judged

* See Note D.

† Lectures II. and V.

from the fact that the bricks used for the immense wall were formed of the earth cast up during its excavation. The passages into the city were by a hundred gates; twenty-five being on each side: and they were all of solid brass. Each street was fifteen miles long, they were fifty in number, and extended across the city in parallel lines; half running in one direction, and the remaining half in another, cutting at right angles.* In other words, they were formed in a straight course, from the several entrances to the gates exactly opposite; and as the Euphrates flowed through the centre, it follows that the five-and-twenty streets, running towards the river, must have been intercepted midway by the stream. This interruption was easily remedied. Stairs were constructed leading down to the water, and boats here stationed to ferry passengers across. These steps were guarded with brass gates, which were affixed; they were closed at night; a circumstance to be remembered, as we shall again refer to it.† Since the course of the Euphrates was from north to south, the city was divided into eastern and western parts; the former being the most ancient, as the latter was only raised by Nebuchadnezzar, who also erected a new residence for himself opposite to the old palace,‡ and connected the two royal habitations by a

* See Note E.

† Note F.

‡ Note G.

bridge, wonderfully built, and also by a subterraneous arch-way carried under the bed of the river.*

The next work demanding our attention is the temple of Belus, situated near the old palace, and which excited the wonder of the spectators on account of its curious tower. The foundation was half a mile in compass. It consisted of eight towers,† one rising above the other, and proportionably decreasing in their circumference. Speaking of this gigantic edifice, the learned Prideaux (by whose excellent work I have been greatly assisted in this description of Babylon) makes the following observation:‡ “Taking it only as it is described by Strabo, it was prodigious enough; for, according to his dimensions only, it was one of the most wonderful works in the world, and much exceeded the greatest of the pyramids of Egypt. . . . For although it fell short of that pyramid at the basis, . . . yet it far exceeded it in the height; the perpendicular measure of the said pyramid being no more than four hundred and eighty-one feet, whereas that of the other was full six hundred. . . . And therefore it was not without reason that Bochartus asserts it to have been the very

* It appears by this that the Thames Tunnel is not an *original* undertaking.

† See Note H.

‡ Anno 570.

same tower which was there built at the confusion of tongues. For it was prodigious enough to answer the Scripture description of it; and it is particularly attested by several authors to have been all built of bricks and bitumen, as the Scriptures tell us the tower of Babel was."

This place was greatly enlarged by Nebuchadnezzar, who erected idolatrous buildings round the tower, and enclosed the whole with a wall, extending upwards of two miles. The entrances were protected with brazen gates, and within were deposited the spoils of vanquished nations, and, as the Bible informs us, the sacred vessels transported from the temple of Jerusalem. This also is the polluted fabric, whose fate was so significantly foretold by Isaiah: "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth."* (Isaiah xlvi. 1.)

The wife of Nebuchadnezzar, whose name was Amyitis, having lived in Media, was accustomed to an elevated and woody country. To gratify her desire, and indulge the taste she had imbibed, her husband made an artificial mountain, which was laid out in beautiful gardens, and raised to a considerable height by mould being laid upon arches, and planted with trees.†

Such was the extent and prosperity of this

* See Note I.

† Berosus, cited by Josephus against Apion, b. i. sect. 19; and see Note K.

renowned city, when Belshazzar came to the throne. It has been already observed that he was a profligate prince, and that the concerns of his government were chiefly conducted under the direction of his mother. During this reign, Cyrus was engaged in subduing different nations, and every successive victory rendered the fate of Babylon more apparent. In the seventeenth year of Belshazzar, or 539 years before Christ, the important event, recorded in our text, occurred.* The chapter thus commences: “Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand;” banquets upon so extensive a scale not being uncommon in former times. History affords several examples.† Some expositors imagine that this entertainment was given as a demonstration of security in the midst of a surrounding foe,—for at this period the city was closely besieged on every side; or, as others suppose, it may have been a periodical commemoration.‡ The king commanded that the golden vessels, plundered from the temple of Jerusalem, and sacred to the Jews, should be brought to their assembly; and out of these, as if influenced by motives of contempt for the God of Israel, “they drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of

* Prideaux.

† See Note L.

‡ Note M.

wood, and of stone." His iniquity had now arrived at the full, the power which he possessed had been abused, the long-suffering of his Creator was not appreciated, and the awful moment was now fast approaching, when he should realise the immutable decree: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Ecc. xii. 7.) During this profane revelry, even whilst the hall was resounding with unhallowed mirth, the doom of the impious monarch was revealed: "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."

How often has it happened that the wicked and unconverted have been suddenly arrested, whilst in the enjoyment of their dissipation and gaiety! Without the appearance of a hand, miraculously brought to inscribe the terms of a death warrant before their eyes, many there are—how many, God only knows—who, in the very midst of impiety, or pursuing a thoughtless career, have either been visited with immediate death, or afflicted with a judgment terminating in their decease! O, that the heedless sinner would reflect upon his awful state. He is only permitted to live through the forbearance of his Maker, and, without the warning of a moment, before he could even cry for mercy, may be

plunged into the abyss of irretrievable despair; transported with enmity towards God in his heart, from the habitation of mortals to the regions of the damned. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26; and see 2 Pet. iii. 9.)

The terrors of an accusing conscience haunt the ungodly. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother," was the spontaneous confession of the sons of Israel, when alarmed at their unexpected position in the land of Egypt, "in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." (Gen. xlii. 21.) The wicked may encourage a delusive peace, so long as detection from crime, or prosperity in their vocation, attends them; but, when dangers threaten or afflictions oppress, they are left a prey to the tortures of a troubled mind. Belshazzar, as might be expected, was terrified at the circumstance which had just occurred. His deeds of impiety, almost obliterated by the intoxicating pleasures of sin, would now burst upon his recollection. "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another." Here was an instantaneous transition from mirth to misery. He

summoned the astrologers, soothsayers, and Chaldeans, and promised that whoever could read and interpret the writing should be made “the third ruler in the kingdom;” whereupon the wise men were introduced: not one of whom, however, could comply with the demand, and consequently his fears increased, and his attendant lords were astounded. During this state of awful suspense, the queen,—not the *wife* of Belshazzar, for his wives and concubines were among the guests at the feast, but his *mother*, Nitocris,*—having heard of the event, entered the banquet house, and thus addressed her son: “O king, live for ever; let not thy thoughts trouble thee, nor let thy countenance be changed: there is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father” (that is, his *grandfather*, Nebuchadnezzar, the term “father” being indiscriminately applied to progenitors) “light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father . . . made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom

* See Note N.

the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation." This advice being immediately followed, the prophet was introduced and thus accosted: "Art thou that Daniel, which art of the children of the captivity of Judah, whom the king my father brought out of Jewry? I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, that thou canst make interpretations, and dissolve doubts: now, if thou canst read the writing, and make known to me the interpretation thereof, thou shalt be clothed with scarlet, and have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third ruler in the kingdom." Observe now the disinterested conduct of the captive Jew, so similar to that practised by Abraham towards the king of Sodom, (Gen. iv. 23.) and by St. Peter towards Simon Magus, (Acts viii. 20.) "Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another; yet I will read the writing unto the king, and make known to him the interpretation." Daniel first reminded Belshazzar of the renown of his grandfather, and of the extent of his dominion, also mentioning his wickedness, and subsequent distraction; and then, after reproving the king, gave the required explanation, and announced the approaching crisis. "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this; but hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have

brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them ; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified : then was the part of the hand sent from him ; and this writing was written."

As the divine sentence, graven upon the wall, was not hieroglyphical, but an intelligible language, it may be inquired how it happened that, although Chaldaic words were used, they could not be understood by the Chaldeans? An easy solution can be given. The writing was in the *Chaldaic tongue*, but the *letters* were *ancient Hebrew*, or what is now called Samaritan ; with which it may be presumed these Babylonians were unacquainted. Daniel was of course familiar with both languages, and therefore he could not only decipher the characters, but also afford the interpretation.*

The inscription was as follows :—" Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin ;" which, literally translated, signifies, " He hath numbered, he hath numbered ; He hath weighed, and they divide ;" and the explanation was immediately subjoined. " This is the interpretation of the thing : *Mene* ;

* See Note O.

God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. *Tekel*; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. *Peres*; thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." You will perceive that Daniel changed the word "*Upharsin*" into "*Peres*;" but the import of these terms is the same, the only difference being that the verb was altered from the *plural* to the *singular* form. "*Upharsin*;" and *they* (the Medes and Persians) divide: "*Peres*," *is divided*; "thy kingdom is divided." The probable reason why the prophet varied the expression seems to have been on account of the alliance between the words, *Peres*, and *Persians*; a transit which introduced an elegant paronomasia.* The result of this remarkable incident remains now to be shewn.

Let us, then, adduce some of those prophecies which minutely foretold not only the destruction of Babylon, but also many of the attendant and contingent circumstances. Isaiah dwells largely upon the subject; and, let it be remembered, that, as he died about 700 years before the christian era, and, as Belzhazzar's feast, with the calamitous issue, occurred only 539 years before Christ, there must have elapsed a period of more than 160 years between the delivery of the predictions and their fulfilment. But with

* See Dr. Gill, in loco.

the Lord, a thousand years are but as one day. (Psalm xc. 4.) It has already been stated, that in the time of this prophet, Babylon was in a prosperous condition, extending its conquests; and that the Medes and Persians were, comparatively, inconsiderable. The 13th chapter, from which a citation has been already made, is entirely occupied with a graphic description of the downfall of this city: "Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, and Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there: but wild beasts of the deserts shall lie there: and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures: and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." In the 21st chapter we read: "Go, up, O Elam," that is, Persia; "besiege, O Media." The prophet, having thus foretold the *nations* that would be employed in the work, enters at once into the action,* and, in

* See Bp. Lowth's exordium to this chapter of the Prophet.

the person of Babylon, bewails her approaching fate: "Therefore are my loins filled with pain; pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it. My heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure,"—mark this circumstance, my brethren, as the great feast of Belshazzar is here foretold*—" *the night of my pleasure* hath he turned into fear unto me. Prepare the table, watch in the watch tower, eat, drink: arise, ye princes, and anoint the shield. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he seeth. And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels;" (representing the two hostile nations)† "and, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen," (Darius and Cyrus). "And he," that is, the watchman, "answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen: and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground."

We here pause for a moment, and remind you, that, in the above predictions, the following points are to be particularly noticed. Babylon is besieged, the Medes and Persians are the invading foes, the attack is made during the celebration of a

* See Jer. li. 39.

† See Note P.

feast, the city is invested on a *sudden*, anguish overtakes the inhabitants, and the glory of the Chaldeans is so entirely destroyed, that wild beasts occupy the desolated plain. This is truly a wonderful prophecy, uttered whilst the metropolis of Chaldea was rising with astonishing rapidity and splendour! The ancient seers of Israel were wont to unfold the *details*, when drawing aside the veil of futurity, and not, like the priests of paganism, to couch their oracles in language so ambiguous as to ensure the improbability of detection, in the event of *accident* failing to accomplish the terms of the imposture. This observation is verified at every step in our inquiries. Let the words of Isaiah—"Therefore are my *loins* filled with pain; pangs have taken hold upon me;" be compared with the fact recorded after the appearance of the hand upon the wall: "Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his *loins* were loosed, and his knees smote one against another."

In a former part of this Lecture, a passage was quoted, pointing out the General, who was to conduct the army,—mentioning him by name. You will remember it was therein predicted that Cyrus should subdue nations before him, and that *he should find the gates open*. The same individual is specified, in the 44th chapter, as also another peculiar circumstance:

“ Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, that saith to the deep, *Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers* ; that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure.”*

And again, the prophet breaks out in the following triumphant strain : “ Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon ; sit on the ground : there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans : for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. . . . Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans : for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms. . . . And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever : so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that *art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly* ; that sayest in thine heart I am, and none else beside me ; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children : But these two things shall come to thee *in a moment, in one day*, the loss of children, and widowhood : they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness : thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge it hath perverted

* See Note Q.

thee: and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; *thou shalt not know from whence it riseth*: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee *suddenly*, which thou shalt not know." (Isaiah xlvii.)

Turn we now to the writings of Jeremiah, who lived at a period approximating to the political crisis of the Chaldeans, wherein we shall find it was thus decreed: "It shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." If we compute from the 4th year of Jehoiakim, when Nebuchadnezzar exiled Daniel and his companions from Jerusalem, to the first year of Darius, who succeeded Belshazzar, it will appear that the appointed time had nearly expired.* Again, "All nations shall serve him," that is, Nebuchadnezzar "and his son," that is, Evil-Merodach, "and his son's son," that is, Belshazzar; "and *then* many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him." And once more: "A drought is upon her waters; *and they shall be dried up*: for it is the land of graven images, and they are

* See Note R.

mad upon their idols. The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them (his assailants), and his hands waxed feeble; anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail.”*

The Holy Scriptures contain many other predictions of similar import; but we will now lay before you, in few words, those especial operations of the Medes and Persians, which afford a commentary upon the prophecies already quoted, and an indisputable proof of the unerring certainty of the divine revelations.

The Babylonians, having been defeated in an engagement, retired within their walls, and were enclosed by Cyrus and his combined army for about two years. The besieged cared not for this; they considered their city impregnable, and knew they had provisions sufficient for a protracted imprisonment.† Every effort proved ineffectual, until a *stratagem* was at length devised. “How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! I have laid a *snare* for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, *and thou wast not aware*: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against the Lord.” The Persian commander had intimation of the feast intended by Bel-

* See chapters xxv. xxvii. l. li. &c. † See Note S.

shazzar, and resolved that, during the celebration of the banquet, when the inhabitants would be engaged in bacchanalian riot, and therefore incapacitated, either for vigilance or resistance, a scheme should be adopted that would accomplish his design.*

At a former period, an artificial lake had been constructed to the westward of the city, and connected with the Euphrates by a canal, for the purpose of diverting the river. The object of this laborious undertaking was to form embankments; which being finished, the head of the canal was closed by a dam, and the waters resumed their wonted course. This very device of the Babylonians, so ingeniously planned and executed, proved the means of their calamity, as predicted by the prophets of the Almighty.† For, a band of men having been despatched with orders to demolish the dam, the lake received the contents of the passing stream, and the channel, near the city, became fordable. The army being now divided, one part was stationed where the river entered, and the other at the point whence it issued from the city; and, at midnight, all things being in readiness, and probably even whilst Daniel was explaining the fatal inscription, the hostile forces marched into the bed of the river, each division being com-

* See Note T.

† Note U.

manded respectively by Gobrias and Gadates,* who, being Babylonians, (for they had deserted through the cruelties inflicted upon them) were well acquainted with the locality.

Thus the words of Isaiah: "that saith to the deep, be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers;" were most literally fulfilled. The inspired writer had further declared: "the gates shall not be shut;" and, accordingly, on this particular evening, owing to the city being abandoned to drunkenness, the brazen gates, at the foot of the steps leading down to the river, which were usually closed at a certain hour, were accidentally neglected. Through these, the enemy passed into the streets, and, according to previous arrangement, both parties simultaneously met at the palace. The guards were slain; and the gates being opened from within, by those who came to ascertain the cause of the tumult, an entrance was effected, and the king perished in the act of self-defence.† "In that night," saith our text, "was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain." Yes, in exact accordance with the sure word of prophecy, *at a period of festivity, through the success of a snare, suddenly, and in ignorance of the means by which the capital was surprised*, the haughty monarch of Assyria was destroyed, and Darius, the uncle of Cyrus, took possession of his kingdom!

* See note V.

† Note W.

Subsequent ages brought still greater disasters upon Babylon. God designed its extinction. Although spared long enough to witness the preaching of the Gospel of peace, and the establishment of a christian church,* yet has it for many years been so utterly ruined that travellers are not agreed as to the site where once it stood. “But wild beasts of the desert lie there.”† (See 1 Peter v. 13; and Isaiah xiii.)

We must leave you, dear brethren, to draw your own practical inferences from the historical truths now laid before you. The vanity of human grandeur, the result of human pride, the wickedness of the human heart, are here conspicuously portrayed, and we may here learn that “God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” (Gal. vi. 7.) O, that the voice of Scripture would arouse each slumbering nation, and influence every unawakened sinner, imprinting upon their souls the faithful admonition of St. Paul, “the night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” (Rom. xiii. 12—14.) The fearful

* See note X.

† Note Y.

consequence of Belshazzar's impiety may at least impress upon our minds an illustration of the parable of our Saviour. A certain rich man, having increased his barns and multiplied his stores, said unto his soul, "soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke xii. 19—21.) If the impenitent and unbelieving will not be convinced of their blindness, ingratitude, and folly; if they are determined to "observe lying vanities and forsake their own mercy," (Jonah ii. 8.) they must eventually realize, when too late to retrace their fatal steps, that "the wages of sin is death." (Rom. vi. 23.) But you, my christian brethren, are not in darkness. "Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch. . . . Let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." (1 Thess. v. 6—11.)

LECTURE VII.

DANIEL, VI. 5.

“ Then said these men, we shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God.”

IN our last Lecture we considered some of the wonderful predictions relating to the kingdom of Babylon, and were instructed that the city of the Chaldeans suddenly passed from its original possessors into the hands of an invading foe; and we are therefore prepared to follow Daniel in his eventful history, and to contemplate his character under the circumstances resulting from a change in the government. The prophet is still in Babylon; but, in common with others who escaped the recent perils, he is now subject to the conqueror. The empire is Medo-Persian. Darius, the uncle of Cyrus, who was introduced in the preceding chapter, is here again connected with our subject. Soon after his settle-

ment upon the throne of his extended dominion, which was about the year 538, before the commencement of the Christian era, it is related concerning him—"It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty princes, which should be over the whole kingdom; and over these, three presidents, of whom Daniel was first; that the princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no damage. Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes, because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set him over the whole realm." The king was evidently desirous to have the affairs of his vast territory conducted upon principles founded in wisdom, that there might be no loss in his revenue, and that justice, according to his notion, might be duly administered. Our prophet was selected on account of his acknowledged probity and discretion, and perhaps also because it was ascertained that he was skilled in matters of futurity. This holy man must have been well known, as nearly seventy years had elapsed since he was brought a captive from Jerusalem; and, as he was verging on the age of ninety, and, through the grace of God, had strictly adhered to the religion of his forefathers, he must frequently have realized, in the favours that were granted to him, and in the personal respect which he witnessed, a fulfilment of the divine promise, "them

that honour me, I will honour." (1 Sam. ii. 30.)
"The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found
in the way of righteousness." (Prov. xvi. 31.)

Let us pause here for a while, and entertain the following seasonable reflections, arising from the consideration of the human heart, which, in its unsanctified condition, is the receptacle of much evil. Many are the noxious weeds which germinate in the baneful soil. However man, in his pride, may contend against a doctrine inculcating the universal depravity of our race, the annals of history, confirming our own daily and hourly experience, demonstrate that the blessed Jesus "needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man;" (John ii. 25,) when he peremptorily affirmed, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man." (Matt. xv. 19, 20.) If, indeed, instead of raising a theoretical superstructure on the foundation of prejudice, ignorance, or fancy, we deduce our illations from recorded facts, and arrive at our conclusions from the indisputable testimony of the senses,—receiving evidence from the things we behold, and from the dispositions we feel—we shall readily perceive how faithful a delineation of our fallen state is revealed in the holy Scriptures: "Lo, this only have I found," said the inspired preacher, "that God

hath made man upright ; but they have sought out many inventions." (Ecc. vii. 29.) How painful and humiliating is the thought that, amongst the myriads of intelligent beings by whom the terrestrial orb is inhabited, not one individual exists, no, not one, who has not brought into the world a principle inclining to wickedness. As the rivers of the earth deepen and expand their waters on the reception of each tributary stream, even so does the amount of human guilt increase with every infant that is ushered into life ! Sin pervades the entire family of man ; in every heart there is the *seed* of rebellion against the Creator.*

If it should be advanced that we are the creatures of circumstances and of habit, this idea must not be entertained without exceptions. Modern infidels are seeking to extenuate their immoral actions, and to weave, as it were, a vesture which shall clothe iniquity with the guise of innocence, by disseminating the monstrous and untenable dogma that, because we are dependant on, and governed by, contingencies, we are not responsible for our movements. It were easy to shew, by an induction of particular instances, the fallacy of this sceptical notion, which, in common with every assertion that proceeds from the mouth of an infidel upon moral and

* See Note A.

religious subjects, although it may allure the attention of the unwary, and gratify the vitiated taste of the profane, is shallow and superficial. Man often defies, acts contrary to, and raises himself above the influence of circumstances. However, in a greater or less degree, our minds are generally controlled, and our manners formed, by the position in which we are placed, and by the habits prevailing around us. Education and birth have considerable weight in modelling the human character. But in the higher ranks of society, as much innate enmity to God, though not the same outward profligacy, is manifested, as is conspicuous amongst the lower orders; and this is the important truth I desire to establish. Our entire species are involved in sin. "There is not," said Solomon, "a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Ecc. vii. 20.) The present advanced state of civilization, commenced and matured in this country, not antecedent, but subsequent, to the introduction of Christianity,* prevents the outbreak of much irregularity and confusion. Vicious propensities are often restrained by the force of opinion; or, if they are not repressed, the current is diverted into a more latent channel. He, who is at once the Creator and the Searcher of the heart, and is cognizant

* See note B.

of our secret thoughts, can alone tell the deeds of darkness that are practised, if not openly to shame the world, yet inwardly to offend the piercing eye of the Omniscient. Such characters, we need scarcely say, notwithstanding their fair appearance, are obnoxious to the wrath of God, and afford the proof to themselves, if not to others, that they are participators in the moral consequences of the fall.

Perhaps also many are deceived, with respect to their condition, because never exposed to the temptations by which others have been overpowered. When we contrast our comparative morality with the profane conduct of those around us, and are assured that we are not running into the same excess with the heedless multitude, being convinced of our superiority, do we, or do we not, indulge a feeling of self adulation, instead of exclaiming with the apostle, "By the grace of God I am what I am?"* (1 Cor. xv. 10.) Let the inquiry be fairly answered, whether, if we have abstained from particular sins, we have ever been enticed, or have possessed the opportunity, or whether fear of detection may not have operated upon our inclinations? Every unregenerate individual is perhaps actuated in his course of mere ethical virtue by one, or more, of these causes; and certainly not by a pure hatred of sin, and the

* See Note C.

intrinsic love of holiness. All are descended from the same stock ; it is impossible that evil should engender good ; and therefore our true character, by nature, is well portrayed in the Book of Job. “ What is man that he should be clean ? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous ? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints ; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight : how much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water ? ” “ Behold,” said the Psalmist, “ I was shapen in iniquity ; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” “ The wicked are estranged from the womb ; they go astray as soon as they be born.”*

We now return to Daniel ; whose simple and holy life was so diametrically opposed to the satanic feeling of his accusers. The history before us affords a striking illustration of the above remarks. We have seen that the aged prophet was advanced to the highest post of honour and confidence in the kingdom of Darius ; and we observe that this peculiar dignity conferred on him kindled the flame of jealousy in the hearts of those heathen lords whom he had superseded. For we read : “ Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom ; but they could find none

* Job xiv. 4 ; xv. 14—16. Psalms li. 5, and lviii. 3.

occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. Then said these men, We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God."

This is valuable testimony in behalf of the captive, proceeding, as it did, from the lips of his foes. His integrity was so conspicuous as to be universally known; and his piety was so deeply seated as to challenge the scrutiny, and confront the malice, of his acute and vigilant enemies. Well had it been for the church of Christ if all her members, in every age, had possessed, and been actuated by, the conscientious and holy principles of this enlightened man. We cannot but recal to memory the expostulations of the Almighty, so pathetically, so persuasively, given: "O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea. O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries."* True religion has suffered irreparable injury, and often has it been brought into disrepute, through the inconsistencies and worldly desires, we do not say, of

* Isaiah xlviii. 18; Psalm lxxxi. 13, 14; and see Deut. v 29.

the hypocritical professor, but of the sincere, though *incautious* disciple, who has not duly regarded the apostolical injunction: "See that ye walk circumspectly." (Eph. v. 15.) Too frequently has it happened that this divine precept has been slighted. The believer, instead of fleeing from, has allowed himself to be approached by the tempter; (James iv. 7;) and has encouraged, and not resisted, the incipient motions inclining him to evil; listening to the persuasive voice of some indwelling lust, instead of watching over, and repelling, the first risings of a corrupt propensity. The result of this negligence has been, that God, who will not be trifled with, has permitted him to feel his weakness in allowing him to fall; a fearful issue, which, be it remembered, inevitably results from tampering with sin! Thus the name of the holy Jesus, at which "every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth," has been dishonoured; and a religion, so pure, so simple, and so practical, that, were its hallowed doctrines universally and cordially received, would promote and establish universal harmony and peace, has been, like its author, disesteemed, vilified, and rejected with contempt.* O, what need, dear brethren, that we should "watch and pray;" that we should be warned by the admonition of

* See note D.

the king of Israel: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life;" that we should adopt the supplication of the Psalmist: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips;" and that we should each hearken to the advice of the faithful Paul: "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand."*

When the wicked are determined on a wayward course, they will find expedients whereby their designs may become effectual; or if their own iniquitous resources should fail, Satan is at hand to counsel and abet them. The *virtue* of Daniel was no obstacle, now that his adversaries were instigated, through envy, to degrade and destroy him. They knew that he was a consistent worshipper of Jehovah, the God of Israel; and, being assured that no power would induce him to apostatize, it occurred, that, as they could discover no *fault* in the object of their jealousy, the *piety* of the Jew might be made the instrument of his overthrow. They accord-

* See Matthew xxvi. 41. Prov. iv. 23. Psalm cxli. 3. Eph. vi. 12.

ingly assembled themselves together, and, obtaining an audience of their sovereign, thus addressed him: "King Darius, live for ever. All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes, the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever shall ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of thee, O king, he shall be cast into the den of lions. Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not." This proposition seems to be the master-piece of hypocrisy; the real intention of the decree is carefully concealed; and no mention is made of the prophet, except that he is falsely included amongst the presidents who offered the petition. The vanity of Darius was flattered by the suggestion, and his consent obtained and ratified, with such studied security, that it could not conveniently be recalled. The law of the people determined that decrees, signed by the royal hand, should not easily be cancelled, and therefore the request being granted, no supplication was allowed, either to any god or man, except to the king, for the space of a month.*

How utterly ignorant of the supporting power

* See Note E.

of a living faith are the fallen and unrenewed posterity of Adam! They cannot comprehend how the saints of the Lord maintain the integrity of their principles, in direct and unflinching opposition to the perils with which they have been threatened. What gigantic efforts have been made to seduce the faithful from the path of peace, and how fruitless have been the attempts! "I am persuaded," saith the apostle, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii. 38, 39.) If the Almighty suffers the church to be persecuted, or the confidence of individual members to be tried, He invariably apportions his distribution of grace according to the need of the recipient. Who will not cleave unto the Rock of his salvation, when cheered and sustained by a divine promise, such as this: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it!" "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (1 Cor. x. 13; and James i. 12.)

The history proceeds to disclose the result of the conspiracy. “When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” His faith was substantial; his piety was sincere; it occurred not to him, as, alas! it has to many since, that the garb of religion may be assumed, when a show of religion is the fashion of the day, and may be laid aside, when the profession of godliness must be accompanied with self-denial and rebuke. Three times a day he continued to bow the knee at a throne of mercy, from whence he knew that he should derive strength and consolation in the hour of his extremity; and, as he turned his face toward the city of his forefathers, in token of his unshaken belief in Jehovah, whose presence had been manifested, and whose altar had been erected in Jerusalem, the prayer of Solomon, offered at the dedication of the temple, and, as it appears, in a prophetic spirit, would recur to his mind with peculiar force, and animate his hopes of a triumphant deliverance: “If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; yet if they shall bethink

themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee, . . . and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies which led them away captive, and pray unto thee *toward their land* which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause." (1 Kings viii. 46—49.)*

Daniel was soon discovered in the attitude of devotion. He was watched, and detected, not in sin, but in prayer. The occasion was eagerly seized; immediately the spies presented themselves as accusers before the king, who was reminded of his decree, and from whom an acknowledgment was elicited that the "thing was true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians;" and no sooner was this point gained than the stratagem was divulged. "Then answered they, and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day." Darius now perceived the real object of the request that had

* See note F.

been preferred by his princes, and, as he esteemed the prophet, was grieved that he had suffered himself to be betrayed into the plot. "He was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him:" revolving the subject in his mind; or perhaps expostulating with the presidents, or consulting with his friends. But the hearts of such men were steeled; they were determined to accomplish their iniquitous purpose; and therefore did they again assemble themselves together and urged the necessity of enforcing the statute. The king, although he ought to have refused compliance, and abrogated a law which had been surreptitiously obtained, reluctantly consented; his better judgment and his affections yielding to outward pressure. Perhaps, like Herod, in the case of John the Baptist, he considered that his word was inviolable, notwithstanding that it was pledged in an unhallowed cause. He had sinned by entertaining the monstrous proposition; and now his conscience was suffering from his folly. "Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God, whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee. And a stone was brought and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own

signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel." According to the law of the country, every precaution was adopted to ensure the awarded punishment, whilst the afflicted sovereign encouraged the latent hope that the wicked design would be frustrated. Nay, he seems, on this occasion, to have been inspired with the assurance that an aged man, so just, virtuous, and pious, as was the Jewish captive, would be favoured with protection from above. "Thy God," said he, "whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee."

When we thus revert to an historic scene, painfully interesting, as marking the atrocities which men will commit, and yet pleasing to the contemplation of a believer, as delineating the verity of Holy Scripture, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever;" (Isaiah xxxii. 17,) we cannot but admire the wisdom of God in having preserved the records of such events; and feel thankful that we are permitted to read and understand them. Our minds become solemnized in the remembrance of those cruelties, which, in all ages of the world, have been inflicted upon a holy people.*

The prophet Daniel, exposed in a den of lions,

* See Hebrews xi. 33—40.

calls to our memory the sufferings and triumphant faith of other witnesses to the truth. The noble army of martyrs is brought in array before us. We revert to the devoted Symeon—who succeeded James in the episcopacy, and was, therefore, the second bishop of Jerusalem—condemned to a painful death for the cause of Christ. This holy man, in the reign of the emperor Trajan, and when he had attained the advanced age of one hundred and twenty, was suspended to the cross.* At a later period, we think of Ignatius, the second bishop of Antioch, and the disciple of the beloved St. John, whom he had seen, and with whom he had conversed. The zeal and piety of this elevated saint accelerated the termination of his earthly career. About the year of our Lord 115, Ignatius was condemned for being a Christian, and, when his enemies had transported him from his diocese to Rome, he was taken to the amphitheatre, where the wild beasts instantaneously devoured him. His glowing faith in the Redeemer was evidenced by the tranquillity with which he was prepared to die. “Let nothing, of things either visible or invisible,” said he, after he was acquainted with the punishment which awaited him, “deprive me of attaining unto Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross, and the companies of wild beasts, let tear-

* See Note G.

ings and rendings, let breaking of bones, and the cutting off of limbs, let the shatterings of the whole body, and all the evil torments of the devil come upon me, only let me attain unto Jesus Christ. All the pleasures of the world and the kingdoms of this life will avail me nothing. Better is it for me to die for Christ Jesus than to reign over the ends of the earth. 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Him I seek who died for us: him I desire who rose again for us. This is the gain that is laid up for me."* Although it may be affirmed of this confiding martyr that, in some instances, he surpassed the boundary of commendable zeal, yet do we here discover an admirable comment upon the words of an apostle, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John v. 4, 5.)†

Polycarp, whose praise has been always in the church, and whose name is expressive of the fecundity of his pious deeds, was appointed the first bishop of Smyrna, and had the privilege of being ordained to this high office by the hands

* Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, v. 6, translated by Chevallier.

† See Note H.

of the Apostle St. John. In the year 167, Marcus Aurelius being the emperor, the Christians over whom he presided were the object of persecution, and the satanic cry was raised, "Away with the atheists;" such were the primitive believers in Jesus impiously called, because they declaimed against the existing and degrading polytheism. "Let a search be made for Polycarp." He was found, and conducted into the presence of the Proconsul; and the proposal, usual in such cases, was offered to him, "Swear by the fortune of Cæsar; change your mind, and cry, 'Away with the Atheists.'" Polycarp, looking severely at the infuriated crowd, stretching forth his hand, and, as if tossing back their exclamation, cried out, "Away with the Atheists," groaning at the same time, and lifting up his eyes toward heaven. The Proconsul still insisting, and saying, "Swear, and I will release you: revile Christ;" the venerable saint replied, "Eighty and six years have I been serving him, and he hath done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my king, who hath brought me salvation?" Inflexible in his love to Jesus, he was resolved rather to suffer than to dishonour him; and, being bound to a stake, the faggots were piled around. Whilst in this situation, he offered up a prayer, commending his soul to the care of his compassionate Redeemer, was pierced by the officers, and expired amidst the enkindled flames,

thus realizing the prophetic words of St. Paul, "We must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts xiv. 22.)*

Trials such as these have been wisely ordained. The cruel designs of the wicked are sometimes permitted to succeed; but it is our comfort to know that, whatever occurs upon earth is under the control of heaven, and, however grievous our present dispensation, to feel with Abraham, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. xviii. 25.) In the case of Daniel, it pleased the Almighty to deliver him from, as well as to support him under, the danger to which he was exposed.

Darius, passing the night in fasting and prayer, evinced the reality of his sorrow at the position of his faithful servant; and reminds us of a similar instance of attachment borne by a heathen prince towards a consistent worshipper of the true God. When the Philistines were jealous of the son of Jesse, who had sojourned amongst them in consequence of the wickedness of Saul, and refused to admit his company on an intended expedition, the king of Gath yielded to the wishes of his lords, but expressed his confidence in the object of their enmity. "Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and

* The Martyrdom of Polycarp, 9. See also Evans' Biography of the Early Church; and Note I.

thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight, for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day; nevertheless, the lords favour thee not." (1 Sam. xxix. 6.) Now that the prophet was surrounded by the lions, the beautiful and appropriate prayer of the sweet Psalmist of Israel may have occurred forcibly to his mind: "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come." (Psalm lxxi. 17, 18.) Darius, early in the morning, and agitated with doubts, hastened to the den, and "cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel; and the king spake, and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me; forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt."

How truly interesting is this description of the mutual salutation of the monarch and the prophet! We may readily conceive how great would be their thankfulness and joy. "Then

was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God." O, my brethren, there is indeed peace and happiness to those who rely upon God. The joy of a believer is that which a stranger cannot intermeddle with. (Prov. xiv. 10.) It is not derived from the world, and therefore the world never can destroy it. Daniel was persecuted for the sake of religion, but was strengthened according to his day. "Blessed are ye," saith Christ, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matt. v. 11, 12.) But let us remember that the accusations of our enemy must be *false* if we would be divinely supported under religious, or any other, trial. It is to be lamented that pious people, through their own indiscretion, have often involved themselves in trouble, and have attributed their sorrow to their zeal for Christ; whereas, it is only when we are circumspect in all our proceedings, and when the simplicity of our lives affords an answer to the calumnies, or cruel mockings, of our foes, that we are authorized to seek for comfort in the promises of the Scripture.

The designs of the wicked are frequently not only frustrated, but made to recoil upon themselves. Well has the Psalmist, speaking of the ungodly man, declared, "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." (Ps. vii. 15, 16.) Haman erected a gallows for the execution of Mordecai; but was hanged thereon himself: (Esth. vii. 10.) and a similar result attended the vile conspiracy against the aged and holy prophet. "The king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den. Then king Darius wrote unto all people, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree, That in every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel; for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end."

With this decree, embodying the fullest acknowledgment of the sovereignty of Jehovah, we will conclude, and thus close the first series of these practical and expository discourses upon

the book of Daniel. In the consideration of the six historical chapters which have now passed under review, we have observed the idolatry and degenerate conduct of the Israelites and other nations, and have witnessed how invariably sin has conduced to degradation and misery. The experience of past ages should be a warning to ourselves. The same enmity to God—the same reckless spirit—the same desire to depart from established order and quietude, which has annihilated the happiness of former kingdoms, threatens our own beloved country with anarchy, bloodshed, and irremediable confusion. We believe that those days are fast approaching when a visible and awful distinction will be finally made between the righteous and the ungodly—when every ear shall tingle, and every heart shall quake—when “there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity—the sea and the waves roaring—men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” (Luke xxi. 25, 26.) But, however great may be the revolutions we shall witness—however grievous may be the afflictions we shall endure, the everlasting arms of redeeming mercy are placed beneath us, and every sincere believer will be enabled to exclaim, “None of these things move

me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." (Acts xx. 24.) O, beloved brethren, if you desire to experience the support, and to participate in the consolations of the blessed gospel of peace, direct your thoughts and your affections to the Lord Jesus Christ—the only Saviour that can possibly avail you in the hour of need. "Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope." (Zech. ix. 12.) "In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer," saith Jesus, "I have overcome the world." (John xvi. 33.)

NOTES.

NOTES TO LECTURE I.

NOTE A. Page 2.

“IF God would have us assent to the truth of any proposition, he either evidences that truth by the usual methods of natural reason, or else makes it known to be a truth which he would have us assent to, by his authority, and convinces us that it is from him by some marks which reason cannot be mistaken in. Reason must be our last judge and guide in every thing. I do not mean that we must consult reason, and examine whether a proposition revealed from God can be made out by natural principles; and if it cannot, that then we may reject it; but consult it we must, and by it examine whether it be a revelation from God, or no; and if reason finds it to be revealed from God, reason, then, declares for it, as much as for any other truth, and makes it one of her dictates. Every conceit that thoroughly warms our fancies, must pass for an inspiration, if there be nothing but the strength of our persuasions, whereby to judge of our persuasions. If

reason must not examine their truth by something extrinsical to the persuasions themselves, inspirations and delusions, truth and falsehood, will have the same measure, and will not be possible to be distinguished.” —*Locke on the Human Understanding*, Book IV. Chap. 19th, and Section 14.

NOTE B. Page 3.

“ As Prideaux judiciously observes, It is the nature of such prophecies not to be thoroughly understood, till they are thoroughly fulfilled. Not that such prophecies are, therefore, like the pagan oracles, of an ambiguous, equivocal, and delusive nature. Obscure they may be, but there is a wide difference between obscurity and equivocation. The pagan oracles were purposely worded in such a manner, that if they failed in one sense, they might hold good in another, though directly the contrary : the scripture prophecies have a determined meaning, and though sometimes they may comprehend more events than one, yet are they never applicable to contrary events. The pagan oracles were delivered for the immediate direction of those who consulted them ; and therefore a mistake at first was of more fatal consequence. The scripture prophecies were intended more for the instruction and illumination of future ages, and therefore it is sufficient if time shall illustrate the particulars. The pagan oracles are no sooner understood, than they are de-

spised, whereas the reverse is true of the scripture prophecies, and the better you understand, the more you will admire them. The completion of the former demonstrates their fraud and futility, the completion of the latter their truth and divinity.”—*Bishop Newton on the Prophecies*. Dissertation XVII. Part II.

NOTE C. Page 7.

The following lines of our great epic poet are beautifully descriptive of the expulsion of our first parents :

“ They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropt, but wiped them soon ;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide :
They, hand in hand, with wandering step, and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.”

Milton's Paradise Lost. B. XII.

NOTE D. Page 9.

“ Our teacher, the Son and Apostle of God the Father and Lord of all things, even Jesus Christ, from whom also we have obtained the name of Christians, hath foretold to us that all these things would come to pass. Wherefore we cleave stedfastly to all things which were taught of him, since whatsoever he before declared should happen, hath indeed been fulfilled. For this is the work of God (only); to declare events

before they happen ; and manifestly to bring them to pass, even as they were predicted."—*Justin Martyr's Apology*, Chap. 14. Chevallier's Translation.

"Whatever is now done was foretold : whatever is now seen, was first heard. If earthquakes swallow up cities ; if islands are invaded by the sea ; if foreign and domestic wars distract states ; if kingdom rises up against kingdom ; if there are famine, and pestilence, and slaughters, in divers places ; if the wild beasts of the mountains lay waste many regions ; if the humble are exalted, and the lofty are laid low ; if justice is rare, and iniquity abounds ; if the regard for every good and wholesome discipline waxes cold ; if even the times and seasons vary from their appointed order, all these have been predicted by the providence of God. While we suffer these calamities we read of them ; when we recognize them as the objects of prophecy, the truth of the scriptures which predict them, is proved. The daily fulfilment of prophecy is, surely, a full proof of revelation. Hence, then, we have a well-founded belief in many things which are yet to come, namely, the confidence arising from our knowledge of the past, because some events, still future, were foretold at the same time with others which are past. The voice of prophecy speaks alike of each ; the Scriptures record them equally ; the same Spirit taught the prophets both. In the predictions, there is no distinction of time ; if there be any such distinction, it is made by men ; while the gradual course of time makes that present which was future, and that past which was present. How can we, then, be blamed for believing also what is predicted respecting the

future, when our confidence is founded upon the fulfilment of prophecies relating to the present and the past?"—*The Apology of Tertullian*, Ch. XX. Chevallier's Trans.

NOTE E. Page 9.

"Suppose that, instead of the spirit of prophecy breathing more or less in every book of scripture, predicting events relative to a great variety of general topics, and delivering, besides, almost innumerable characteristics of the Messiah, all meeting in the person of Jesus, there had been only *ten* men in ancient times who pretended to be prophets, each of whom exhibited only *five* independent criteria as to place, government, concomitant events, doctrine taught, effects of doctrine, character, sufferings or death; the meeting of all which, in one person, should prove the reality of their calling as prophets, and of his mission in the character they have assigned him: suppose, moreover, that all events were left to *chance* merely, and we were to compute, from the principles employed by mathematicians in the investigation of such subjects, the probability of these *fifty* independent circumstances happening *at all*. Assume that there is, according to the technical phrase, *an equal chance* for the happening or the failure of any one of the specified particulars, then the probability *against* the occurrence of all the particulars in *any* way, is that of the 50th power of 2 to unity; that is, the probability is greater than 1125000000000000 to 1, or greater than *eleven hundred and twenty-five millions of millions to one*,

that all these circumstances do not turn up, even at distinct periods. This computation, however, is independent of the consideration of *time*. Let it, then, be recollected farther, that, if any one of the specified circumstances happen, it *may* be the day after the delivery of the prophecy, or at any period from that time to the end of the world; this will so indefinitely augment the probability against the contemporaneous occurrence of merely these *fifty* circumstances, that it surpasses the power of numbers to express correctly the immense improbability of its taking place. Be it remembered, also, that in this calculation I have assumed the hypothesis *most* favourable to the adversaries of prophecy, and the most unfavourable possible to the well being of the world, and the happiness of its inhabitants; namely, the hypothesis that every thing is fortuitous; and it will be seen how my argument is strengthened by restoring things to their proper state. If every thing were left to blind chance, it appears that the probability against the fulfilment of only fifty independent predictions in the same time, place, and individual, would be too great to express numerically; how much greater, then, must it be, in fact, when all events are under the control of a Being of matchless wisdom, power, and goodness, who hates fraud and deception, who must especially hate it when attempted under his name and authority, who knows all that occurs in all places, and who can dissipate, with ‘the breath of his mouth,’ every deceiver, and all their delusions? The more we know of the prophecies, and of history, whether sacred or profane, the more we are struck with the correspondence of predictions and

events; their coincidence, in hundreds of instances, is so palpably notorious, that none can deny it: every principle of reason, every result of correct computation, instituted with a view to this inquiry, is in favour of the positions maintained by Christians in all ages. Imagine these to be still doubtful, and what is there else that is stable and certain?"—*Letters of Dr. Olinthus Gregory*, Letter VI. (*See Emerson on Chances*, Prop. 3. *Wood's Algebra*, Art. 419, Chances.)

NOTE F. Page 10.

"It cannot be supposed that God has delivered prophecies only to satisfy or employ the curiosity of the inquisitive, or that he gave his Spirit to men merely to enable them to give forth predictions for the amusement and entertainment of the world. There must be some end intended *worthy* of the *author*. What end can you conceive *worthy of God* but the promotion of virtue and religion, and the general peace and happiness of mankind? These things belong to him as Creator and Governor of the World: these things are his province."—*Bishop Sherlock on Prophecy*, Discourse 3rd.

NOTE G. Page 12.

"Daniel begins his computation from the time that Nebuchadnezzar was sent from Babylon by his father on this expedition, which was in the latter end of the third year of Jehoiakim: after that two months at

least must have been spent in his march to the borders of Syria. There, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim, (we suppose in the beginning of that year,) he fought the Egyptians; and, having overthrown them in battle, besieged Charchemish, and took it; after this, he reduced all the provinces and cities of Syria and Phœnicia, in which, having employed the greatest part of the year (and a great deal of work it was to do within that time) in the beginning of October, he came and laid siege to Jerusalem, and about a month after took the city; and from hence we date the beginning of Daniel's servitude, and also the beginning of the seventy years of the Babylonish captivity, and therefore do reckon that year to have been the first of both."
 —*Prideaux's Connexion.* Anno 606.

NOTE H. Page 13.

"This change of names, Calmet properly remarks, was a mark of dominion and authority. It was customary for masters to impose new names upon their slaves; and rulers often, on their ascending the throne, assumed a name different from that which they had before.

"Daniel signifies 'God is my judge.' This name they changed into Belteshatstsar; in Chaldee, 'the treasure of Bel,' or 'the depository of the secrets (or treasure) of Bel.'

"Hananiah signifies, 'the Lord has been gracious to me;' or 'he to whom the Lord is gracious.' This name was changed into Shadrach, Chaldee, which has been variously translated; 'the inspiration of the

sun ;' 'God, the author of evil, be propitious to us ;' 'let God preserve us from evil.'

"Mishael signifies, 'he who comes from God.' Him they called Meshach, which, in Chaldee, signifies, 'he who belongs to the goddess Sheshach,' a celebrated deity of the Babylonians, mentioned by Jeremiah, chap. xxv. 26.

"Azariah, which signifies, 'the Lord is my Helper,' they changed into Abed-nego, which, in Chaldee, is 'the servant of Nego,' who was one of their divinities ; by which they meant either the *sun* or the *morning star*, whether *Jupiter* or *Venus*."—*Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary*, in loco.

NOTE I. Page 17.

"For the third of Cyrus being the seventy-third year of his captivity, if he were eighteen years old at his carrying to Babylon, (as I have shewn before, is the least that can be supposed,) he must have been in the ninety-first year of his age at this time ; which was a length of years given to few in those days."—*Prideaux's Connexion*. Anno 534.

NOTE K. Page 18.

"The people of the Jews, during the time of the captivity, had, in a great measure, been compelled to a conformity with the manners and customs of Babylon ; for not only the proper names of several of their most eminent persons were altered, but their language had received into it many new words from the Chal-

dean : even their letters were changed, and the Chaldee character assumed in their stead. It is generally agreed that this is the character in which our present Bibles are printed, and that the original Hebrew was what is now called the Samaritan, of which the only genuine remains is the Samaritan Pentateuch. The prophet Daniel had been early taught the language of the Chaldeans, and from a long residence in the country, may be presumed to have been well acquainted with it: his book also seems to have been designed not only for the Jews who returned from the captivity, but for those, either Jews or Israelites, who remained at Babylon, and not without regard to the benefit of the Chaldeans themselves, whose annals might receive confirmation from his work, and be alleged as vouchers of its authenticity. Now what could be more natural than that an author thus circumstanced should contrive his work in a manner the most extensively useful; and with this view should compose a part of it in the language of that country wherein he dwelt, and whose character he used, and the other part in the original language of the church of God?"—*Dr. Wintle's Translation of Daniel.—Preliminary Dissertation.*

"The predictions of things to come relate to the state of the church in all ages: and amongst the old prophets, *Daniel* is most distinct in order of time, and easiest to be understood: and therefore in those things which relate to the last times, he must be made the key to the rest."—*Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on Daniel.*

NOTE L. Page 19.

“ The Jews do not reckon him (Daniel) to be a prophet ; and therefore place his prophecies only among the Hagiographa : and they serve the Psalms of David after the same rate. The reason which they give for it in respect of both is, that they lived not the prophetic manner of life, but the courtly ; David in his own palace, as king of Israel, and Daniel in the palace of the king of Babylon, as one of his chief counsellors and ministers in the government of that empire. And, in respect of Daniel, they further add, that, although he had divine revelations delivered unto him, yet it was not in the prophetic way, but by dreams and visions of the night, which they reckon to be the most imperfect manner of revelation, and below the prophetic.”
—*Prideaux's Connexion*. Anno 534.

NOTE M. Page 20.

“ Never were any prophecies delivered more clearly, or fulfilled more exactly, than all these prophecies of Daniel were. Porphyry, who was a great enemy to the Holy Scriptures, as well of the Old Testament as of the New, acknowledged this. And therefore, he contends, that they were historical narratives written after the facts were done, and not prophetical predictions, foretelling them to come. This Porphyry was a learned heathen, born at Tyre, in the year of Christ 233, and there called Malchus ; which name, on his going among the Greeks, he changed into that of Porphyry, that signifying the same in the Greek

language which Malchus did in the Phœnician, the language then spoken at Tyre. He being a bitter enemy to the christian religion, wrote a large volume against it, containing fifteen books, whereof the twelfth was wholly against the prophecies of Daniel. Those concerning the Persian kings and the Macedonian that reigned as well in Egypt as in Asia, having been all, according to the best historians, exactly fulfilled, he could not disprove them by denying their completion; and therefore, for the overthrowing of their authority, he took the quite contrary course, and laboured to prove their truth; and from hence alleged, that being so exactly true in all particulars, they could not therefore be written by Daniel so many years before the facts were done, but by some one else under his name, who lived after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes.

. For which purpose he made use of the best Greek historians then extant. Such were Callinicus Sutorius, Diodorus Siculus, Hieronymus, Polybius, Posidonius, Claudius Theon, and Andronicus Alypius; and from them made evident proof, that all that is written in the eleventh chapter of Daniel, was truly, in every particular, acted and done in the order as there related; and from this exactness of completion, endeavoured to infer the assertion mentioned, that these prophecies were written after the facts were done, and therefore are rather historical narratives relating things past, than prophetic predictions, foreshewing things afterwards to come. But Jerome turns the argument upon him, and with more strength of reason infers, that this way of opposing these prophecies gives the greatest evidence of their truth, in that what the prophet foretold

is hereby allowed to be so exactly fulfilled, that he seemed to unbelievers not to foretel things to come, but to relate things past. Jerome, in his Comments on Daniel, makes use of the same authors that Porphyry did; and what is in these Comments are all the remains which we now have of this work of that learned heathen, or of most of those authors which he made use of in it."—*Prideaux's Connexion*. Anno 164.

NOTE N. Page 21.

The account of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem is thus given by Josephus. "Now Alexander, when he had taken Gaza, made haste to go up to Jerusalem; and Jaddua, the high priest, when he heard that, was in an agony, and under terror, as not knowing how he should meet the Macedonians, since the king was displeased at his foregoing disobedience. He therefore ordained that the people should make supplications, and should join with him in offering sacrifices to God, whom he besought to protect that nation, and to deliver them from the perils that were coming upon them; whereupon God warned him in a dream, which came upon him after he had offered sacrifice, that he should take courage, and adorn the city, and open the gates; that the rest should appear in white garments, but that he and the priests should meet the king in the habits proper to their order, without the dread of any ill consequences, which the providence of God would prevent. Upon which, when he rose from his sleep, he greatly rejoiced; and declared to all the warning he had received from God. According to which

dream he acted entirely, and so waited for the coming of the king. And when he understood that he was not far from the city, he went out in procession with the priests and the multitude of the citizens. The procession was venerable, and the manner of it different from that of other nations. It reached to a place called Sapha, which name, translated into Greek, signifies a *prospect*, for you have thence a prospect both of Jerusalem and of the temple; and when the Phœnicians and the Chaldeans that followed him, thought they should have liberty to plunder the city, and torment the high-priest to death, which the king's displeasure fairly promised them, the very reverse of it happened; for Alexander, when he saw the multitude at a distance, in white garments, while the priests stood clothed with fine linen; and the high priest in purple and scarlet clothing, with his mitre on his head, having the golden plate, whereon the name of God was engraved, he approached by himself, and adored that name, and first saluted the high priest. The Jews also did all together, with one voice, salute Alexander, and encompass him about; whereupon the kings of Syria and the rest were surprised at what Alexander had done, and supposed him disordered in his mind. However, Parmenio alone went up to him, and asked him how it came to pass that, when all others adored him, he should adore the high priest of the Jews? To whom he replied, 'I did not adore him, but that God who hath honoured him with his high priesthood; for I saw this very person in a dream, in this very habit, when I was at Dios, in Macedonia, who, when I was considering with myself how I might obtain the

dominion of Asia, exhorted me to make no delay, but boldly to pass over the sea thither, for that he would conduct my army, and would give me the dominion over the Persians; whence it is, that having seen no other in that habit, and now seeing this person in it, and remembering that vision, and the exhortation which I had in my dream, I believe that I bring this army under the divine conduct, and shall therewith conquer Darius, and destroy the power of the Persians, and that all things will succeed according to what is in my own mind.' And when he had said this to Parmenio, and had given the high priest his right hand, the priests ran along by him, and he came into the city; and when he went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high-priest and the priests. And when the book of Daniel was showed him, wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended; and as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present, but the next day he called them to him, and bade them ask what favours they pleased of him; whereupon the high priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted all they desired," &c. &c.—*Josephus's Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XI. Chap. 8.

NOTES TO LECTURE II.

NOTE A. Page 26.

“In this stock of Cain, also, began idolatry, and worshipping the creature instead of the Creator, blessed for ever ; and, in a mournful feeling of this dishonour done to God by it, Seth calls his son, that was born to him in those times, ‘ Enos,’ or ‘ Sorrowful ;’ because ‘ Then began profaneness in calling upon the name of the Lord ;’ Noah seemeth to be called the ‘ Eighth,’ in reference to these times, namely, the ‘ Eighth in succession’ from Enos, in whose times the world began to be profane.”—*Lightfoot's Works*. Pitman's edition, vol. ii. page 75.

Clement of Alexandria (as is shewn by Bishop Kaye in his examination of this Father's works) has strangely stated that God gave the ancients *permission* to worship the host of heaven.

NOTE B. Page 27.

The following quotation is from Dr. Gill's Commentary on the same passage :—“ The Targum of Jonathan is, ‘ This was the age, in the days of which they began to err, and they made themselves idols, and surnamed their idols by the name of the word of the Lord ;’ with which agrees the note of Jarchi,—‘ Then they began to call the names of men, and the names of herbs, by the name of the blessed God, to make idols

of them ;' and some of them say, particularly Maimonides, that Enos himself erred, and fell into idolatry, and was the first inventor of images, by the mediation of which men prayed to God : but all this seems to be without foundation, and injurious to the character of this antediluvian Patriarch ; nor does it appear that idolatry obtained in the posterity of Seth, or among the people of God so early ; nor is such an account agreeable to the history which Moses is giving of the family of Seth, in opposition to that of Cain."

NOTE C. Page 28.

" This country (Chaldea) was now become idolatrous, for though it was first inhabited and peopled by the posterity of Shem, in the time of Arphaxad, yet these, in process of time, degenerated from the true religion, and fell into idolatry. The same, Maimonides calls Zabæans, in whose faith and religion, he says, Abram was brought up, and who asserted there was no other god but the sun, moon, and stars ; and these Zabæans, as he relates, from their books and annals, say of Abram themselves, that he was educated in Cuthia, and dissented from the common people ; and asserted, that, besides the sun, there was another creator, to whom they objected, and so disputes arose among them on this subject ; now Abram being convinced of idolatry, is called out from those people, and to have no fellowship with them ; it is, literally, in the Hebrew text, *go to thee out of thy country* ; for thy profit and good, as Jarchi interprets it ; as it must be to quit all society with such an idolatrous and super-

stitious people.”—*Dr. Gill's Commentary on the 12th Chap. of Genesis, 1st Verse.*

NOTE D. Page 28.

That Abraham's family were tainted with idolatry, appears from the history of a somewhat later period, when Laban's gods were stolen by his daughter Rachel.—Gen. xxxi. 19, 30.

NOTE E. Page 28.

As there is an apparent chronological difficulty in connexion with the periods, 400 and 430 years, I subjoin the following quotations from Dr. Gill's Commentary. “These 400 years are to be reckoned from the birth of Isaac to the Israelites going out of Egypt, and are counted by Jarchi thus; Isaac was 60 years of age when Jacob was born, and Jacob, when he went down into Egypt, was 130, which make 190; and the Israelites were in Egypt 210 years, which complete the sum of 400: according to Eusebius, there were 405 years from the birth of Isaac to the exodus of Israel; but the round number is only given, as is very usual; and though the sojourning of the Israelites is said to be 430 years, Exod. xii. 40, this takes in the sojourning of Abram in that land, who entered into it 25 years before the birth of Isaac, which, added to 405, the sum total is 430; for Abram was 75 years of age when he left Haran and went to Canaan; and Isaac was born when he was 100 years old. See Gen. xii. 4; and xxi. 5.”—*On Genesis xv. 13.*

To the words "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, &c. the Septuagint version adds, *and in the land of Canaan*; and the Samaritan version is, 'the sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers, in the land of Canaan, and in the land of Egypt.' Agreeably to which are both the Talmuds: in one of them the words are, 'in Egypt and in all lands;' and in the other, 'in Egypt, and in the rest of the lands;' and in the same way Aben Ezra interprets the words. And certain it is, that Israel did not dwell in Egypt 430 years, and even not much more than 200 years; but then they and their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelt so long in Mesopotamia, in Canaan, and in Egypt, in foreign countries, in a land not theirs, as the phrase is, Gen. xv. 13, where the place of their sojourning, and the time of it, are given by way of prophecy. The Jews reckon from the vision of God to Abraham between the pieces, (Gen. xv. 17,) to the birth of Isaac, 30 years; so the Targum of Jonathan: but that cannot be, though, from his coming out of his own native place, Ur of the Chaldeans, to the birth of Isaac, might be so many years, since he was 75 years of age when he came out of Haran, Gen. xii. 4; and if he stayed at Haran five years, as probably he did, then there were just 30 from his coming out of Ur of the Chaldees to Isaac's birth, since he was born when he was 100 years old; and from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob was 60 years, Gen. xxv. 26, and from thence to his going down to Egypt was 130, Gen. xlvii. 9, and from thence to the coming of Israel out of Egypt were 210 years, as is generally computed, which make the exact sum of 430 years."—*On Exodus* xii. 40.

NOTE F. Page 30.

“What inclined Aaron to make it in the form of a calf, is not easy to say; whether in imitation of the cherubim, one of the faces of which was that of an ox, as Moncæus thought; or whether in imitation of the Osiris of the Egyptians, who was worshipped in a living ox, and sometimes in the image of one, even a golden one. Plutarch is express for it, and says, that the ox was an image of Osiris, and that it was a golden one; and so, says Philo the Jew, the Israelites, emulous of Egyptian figments, made a golden ox; or whether he did this to make them ashamed of their idolatry, thinking they would never be guilty of worshipping the form of an ox eating grass, or because an ox was an emblem of power and majesty.”—*Dr. Gill's Commentary on Exodus xxxii. 4.*

NOTE G. Page 30.

Calmet observes, that the Israelites do not appear to have been *inventors* of idols, but to have conformed themselves to the worship of the different nations among whom they sojourned.

NOTE H. Page 31.

“This extermination, which might have been accomplished by a pestilence, by fire, by earthquakes, was appointed to be done by the hands of the Israelites, as being the clearest and most intelligible method of displaying the power and righteousness of the God of

Israel; his power over the pretended gods of other nations, and his righteous hatred of the crimes into which they were fallen.”—*Dr. Paley's Sermons.*

NOTE I. Page 35.

See Prideaux, anno 747, where this subdivision of the Assyrian empire is shewn; and where, also, Arbaces is identified with Tiglath-Pileser.

NOTE K. Page 37.

“Shalmaneser began the siege of Samaria, in *the beginning* of the fourth year of Hezekiah, and the seventh of Hoshea; so that the *three years' siege* was concluded by *the end* of the sixth of the former, and the ninth of the latter prince.”—*Scott's Commentary.*

NOTE L. Page 37.

Bishop Newton seems to confine the deportation of these heathen into the country of the Israelites to the reign of Esarhaddon. No doubt, this successor of Shalmaneser was engaged in the work, as Ezra (ch. iv. 2.) states as much. But may not his grandfather have *commenced* the interchange of people? We may certainly conclude so, from the perusal of 2 Kings xvii. 24. Josephus (Ant. B. ix. c. 14.) expressly declares, that *Shalmaneser* brought the Cutheans into Samaria; and, in the same place, affords an example of the slight esteem in which the Samaritans were held by the Jews. He thus writes: “When

they (the Samaritans) see the Jews in prosperity, they pretend that they are changed, and allied to them, and call them kinsmen, as though they were derived from Joseph, and had, by that means, an original alliance with them: but when they see them falling into a low condition, they say they are no way related to them, and that the Jews have no right to expect any kindness or marks of kindred from them, but they declare that they are sojourners, that come from other countries.”—*Josephus's Ant.* Book IX. Chap. XIV.

NOTE M. Page 38.

“In Vol. I. of the Supplement to Sir William Jones’s works, we find a translation of the *History of the Afghans*, by Mr. H. Vansittart, from which it appears that they derive their own descent from the Jews. On this history Sir William Jones writes the following note. ‘ This account of the *Afghans* may lead to a very interesting discovery. We learn from *Esdras*, that the ten tribes, after a wandering journey, came to a country called *Arsaret*, where we may suppose they settled. Now the *Afghans* are said, by the best Persian historians, to be descended from the Jews; they have traditions among themselves of such a descent, and it is even asserted that their families are distinguished by the names of *Jewish tribes*; although, since their conversion to the *Islam*, they studiously conceal their origin. The *Pushtoo*, of which I have seen a dictionary, has a manifest resemblance to the *Chaldaic*, and a considerable district under their dominion is called *Hazarek*, or *Hazaret*, which might easily

have been changed into the word used by Esdras. I strongly recommend an inquiry into the literature and history of the Afghans.' Every thing considered, I think it by far the most probable that the Afghans are the descendants of the Jews, who were led away captives by the Assyrian kings."—*Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary on 2 Kings xvii. 6.*

The following opinion of Philo Judeus, who lived shortly after the time of our Saviour, is interesting, as shewing his views respecting the restoration of his people. "They will experience the goodness of the Saviour and merciful God. For though they may be in a state of slavery, and have been carried captive by their enemies to the farthest parts of the earth, yet they will all, as it were, upon a signal given, be set free in one day. For their general return to virtue will be matter of universal wonder to their masters. Μεθησονται γαρ αυτες, αιδεσθεντες κρειττονων αρχειν. They will send them back free to their country, and be ashamed any longer to rule over persons so superior to themselves." Mr. Bryant, after having given the above translation, adds the following: "He (that is Philo) then proceeds to mention their return from Greece, and other places, and of their being conducted by a divine personage in appearance far beyond any thing that the eye of mortal ever beheld; who would be perceptible to them, but invisible to the rest of the world. Then their land was to be replenished, and happiness and honour to be their portion; and a superabundance of good things was to ensue—καθαπερ αενναων πηγων τε Θεο χαριτων ρεεσαι—as flowing from

the everlasting fountain of God's grace and goodness."

—*Bryant's Philo Judeus*, page 168.

It is well known that the army of the East India Company, although consisting chiefly of Mahometans and Hindoos, contains a vast number of the children of Abraham. But whatever may be advanced upon this interesting subject, must be merely hypothetical. I will only, therefore, add the following passage from a sermon by Dr. M'Caul, which is certainly deserving of our consideration. Discoursing on the 3rd chapter of Hosea, he observes: "The prophet evidently includes all the twelve tribes. He calls them 'the children of Israel,' and he is especially the prophet of the house of Israel as distinguished from the house of Judah: and, perhaps, the accuracy of the prophet's description may serve to furnish a solution of that great difficulty, the finding of the ten tribes. He certainly gives very definite criteria whereby they may be recognised. Wherever they exist, their political condition, like that of the Jews, must answer to the data here laid down. They cannot exist as an independent kingdom, for the prophet says, 'without king;' nor yet as a dependent principality, for he adds, 'without prince.' No independent tribes, therefore, can lay any claim to this character. Further, wherever the ten tribes exist, they have not got the true religion, for they, as well as the Jews, are symbolized by the woman whom the prophet bought. They must be 'without sacrifice and without ephod.' Neither can they be, in any sense, idolaters, for they are 'without image and without teraphim.' I confess, that when I

look upon the Jews, and see how exactly their state corresponds with that described, and how difficult, if not impossible, it is to find another nation, whose political and religious state is similar, I feel strongly inclined to the opinion, that the ten tribes are now found mingled with the other two. I do not mean that the ten tribes returned from Babylon, for in Ezra and Nehemiah we are told particularly who did return, but that the main body of the Jews, who remained in Babylon, who were dispersed in Egypt and other countries, and who never returned, naturally mingled with their brethren of the other tribes, and that this intermixture increased after the destruction of the second temple. If this supposition be correct, it will afford an easy and natural interpretation of St. Paul's words, 'Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come,' (Acts xxvi. 7.) And will also account for St. James addressing his epistle to the twelve tribes rather than to the Jews. But however that be, we see that so far as we have an opportunity of verifying the prophecy, that is, in the case of the Jews, the first part has been literally and minutely fulfilled. We have, therefore, a sure warrant for believing that that part which still remains prediction will be as literally and exactly accomplished."—*See Two Sermons published by Dr. M'Caul on the Jews.*

NOTE N. Page 38.

"The war being carried on between the Egyptians and the Persians, and each contending to enlarge and

strengthen their barrier on the borders, it seems most likely that Darius (Nothus), on this occasion, came in person into Phœnicia ; and that then it was that Sanballat, attending him, so far insinuated himself into his favour, as to obtain from him a grant to build on Mount Gerizim, near Samaria, a temple like that at Jerusalem, and to make Manasseh, his son-in-law, high priest of it ; and that herein all that had its foundation, which Josephus, by mistaking the time, attributes to Darius Codomannus and Alexander the Great.

“ The first of these Samaritans were the Cutheans, and such others of the eastern nations as Esarhaddon planted there after the deportation of the Israelites. But when these apostate Jews flocked to them, they became a mongrel sort of people, made up of both. But the mixing of so many Jews among them, soon made a change in their religion. For whereas they had hitherto worshipped the God of Israel only in conjunction with their other gods, that is, the gods of those nations of the east from whence they came ; after a temple was built among them, in which the daily service was constantly performed in the same manner as at Jerusalem, and the book of the law of Moses was brought to Samaria, and there publicly read to them, they soon left off worshipping their false gods, and conformed themselves wholly to the worship of the true God, according to the rule which was in that book prescribed to them, and were more exact in it (as some of the Jewish doctors acknowledge) than the Jews themselves. However, the Jews, looking on them as apostates, hated them above all the nations of the earth, so as to avoid all manner of converse and

communication with them.”—*Prideaux's Connexion*. Anno 409.

NOTE O. Page 45.

The infidel, Thomas Paine, in the book which he dared to publish against the Bible, among other proofs he has given of his ignorance, as well as of his wickedness, adduces this prophecy of Ezekiel as involving a *contradiction*! With respect to the statements of this unhappy individual, we may truly say, in the language of the heathen poet: ‘*Ab uno, disce omnes* ;’ from this one you may ascertain the tenor of the whole. Josephus observes, “That Zedekiah and his friends did not believe the prophecies which Jeremiah and Ezekiel delivered against Jerusalem, in consequence of the apparent disagreement between them—the one foretelling that the king should be carried to Babylon, and the other that he should not *see* Babylon.”—Ant. X. Chap. 7.

NOTE P. Page 46.

“Now the general of the army, Nebuzaradan, when he had carried the people of the Jews into captivity, left the poor, and those that had deserted, in the country, and made one, whose name was Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, a person of a noble family, their governor ; which Gedaliah was of a gentle and righteous disposition. He also commanded them that they should cultivate the ground, and pay an appointed tribute to the king. He also took Jeremiah, the prophet, out of

prison, and would have persuaded him to go along with him to Babylon, for that he had been enjoined by the king to supply him with whatsoever he wanted; and if he did not like to do so, he desired him to inform him where he resolved to dwell, that he might signify the same to the king. But the prophet had no mind to follow him, nor to dwell any where else, but would gladly live in the ruins of his country, and in the miserable remains of it."—*Josephus's Antiq.* Book X. Chap. IX.

NOTES TO LECTURE III.

NOTE A. Page 49.

The two emperors who governed Assyria, between Esarhaddon and Nabopolassar, were Saosduchinus and Chyniladanus; the former came to the throne 667 years, and the latter 647 years before Christ.—*See Rollin's Ancient History, and Prideaux.*

NOTE B. Page 49.

The following account of the joint reign of Nabopolassar and his son, is given by Berosus, as quoted by Josephus in his first book against Apion: "When Nabolassar, father of Nabuchodonosor, heard that the

governor, whom he had set over Egypt, and over the parts of Celesyria and Phoenicia, had revolted from him, he was not able to bear it any longer, but committing certain parts of his army to his son Nabuchodonosor, who was then but young, he sent him against the rebel. Nabuchodonosor joined battle with him, and conquered him, and reduced the country under his dominion again. Now it so fell out, that his father, Nabolassar, fell into a distemper at this time, and died in the city of Babylon, after he had reigned twenty-nine years. But as he understood, in a little time, that his farther Nabolassar was dead, he set the affairs of Egypt and the other countries in order, and committed the captives he had taken from the Jews, and Phœnicians, and Syrians, and of the nations belonging to Egypt, to some of his friends, that they might conduct that part of the forces that had on heavy armour, with the rest of his baggage, to Babylonia, while he went in haste, having but a few with him, over the desert to Babylon, whither, when he was come, he found the public affairs had been managed by the Chaldeans, and that the principal persons among them had preserved the kingdom for him. Accordingly he now entirely obtained all his father's dominions."—*Section 19.*

NOTE C. Page 50.

“ On his arrival at the palace, he (Nebuchadnezzar) received the government from the hands of those who had carefully reserved it for him; and thereon succeeded his father in the whole empire, which contained Chaldea, Assyria, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine, and

reigned over it, according to Ptolemy, forty-three years, the first of which begins from the January following, which is the Babylonish account, from which the Jewish account differs two years, as reckoning his reign from the time he was admitted to be partner with his father. From hence we have a double computation of the years of his reign, the Jewish and the Babylonish; Daniel follows the latter; but all other parts of scripture that make mention of him the other.”
 —*Prideaux*. Anno 604.

NOTE D. Page 51.

Dr. Lightfoot observes, that the term wise men, or magicians, in scripture, is always used in a bad sense, as denoting sorcerers.—Vol. IV. page 215. Pitman's edition.

NOTE E. Page 52.

The following observation of Dr. Lardner, as abridged by Dr. Paley, points out the correctness with which St. Luke touches upon historical events: “The word, which is here translated deputy, signifies *proconsul*, and upon this word our observation is founded. The provinces of the Roman empire were of two kinds; those belonging to the emperor, in which the governor was called *proprætor*; and those belonging to the senate, in which the governor was called *proconsul*. And this was a regular distinction. Now it appears, from Dio Cassius, that the province of Cyprus, which, in the original distribution was assigned to the em-

peror, had been transferred to the senate, in exchange for some others; and that, after this exchange, the appropriate title of the Roman governor was proconsul."—*Evidences of Christianity*, Proposition 2nd. Chap. 6th.

NOTE F. Page 60.

"It was from this prophecy, too, that the distinction first arose of the four great empires of the world, which hath been followed by most historians and chronologers in their distribution of times. These four empires, as they are the subject of this prophecy, are likewise the subject of the most celebrated pens, both in former and in later ages. The histories of these empires are the best written, and the most read of any; they are the study of the learned, and the amusement of the polite; they are of use both in schools and in senates: we learn them when we are young, and we forget them not when we are old; from hence examples, instructions, laws, and politics, are derived for all ages; and very little, in comparison, is known of other times, or of other nations."—*Bishop Newton on the Prophecies*, Diss. 13.

NOTE G. Page 62.

"Christ's kingdom, from small beginnings, has increased, and will more and more, until the whole earth is subject to it: this began to have its accomplishment in the first times of the gospel, especially when the Roman empire, as pagan, was destroyed by Constantine, and the kingdom of Christ was set up in

it; and it received a further accomplishment at the time of the Reformation, when Rome papal had a deadly blow given it, and the gospel of Christ was spread in several nations and kingdoms; but it will receive its full accomplishment when both the eastern and western antichrists shall be destroyed, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the Lord's and his Christ's." Rev. xi. 15.—*Dr. Gill's Commentary on Daniel* ii. 35.

NOTE H. Page 62.

According to the chronology of Usher and Prideaux, this dream occurred in the year of the world 3401; and Christ was born in the year 4004. It is to be understood, that this prediction only experienced the beginning of its fulfilment at the first advent of our Saviour, as shewn above, in Note G.

NOTE I. Page 63.

The persecutions in the reign of Nero and Domitian were of the most exterminating character. In the last century, the efforts of Robespierre and Voltaire were as determined, and, thank God! as unsuccessful; notwithstanding the impious watch-word of the latter, "crush the wretch."—*See Milner's Church History, and Sir Walter Scott's Life of Napoleon.*

NOTE K. Page 64.

"Here, by the rock, is meant, either the confession of faith made by Peter; not the act, nor form, but the

matter of it, it containing the prime articles of Christianity, and which are as immoveable as a rock; or rather Christ himself, who points, as it were, with his finger to himself, and whom Peter had made such a glorious confession of; and who was prefigured by the rock the Israelites drank water out of in the wilderness, and is comparable to any rock for height, shelter, strength, firmness, and duration, and is the one and only foundation of his church and people, and on whom their security, salvation, and happiness entirely depend. Christ is a rock that is higher than they, where they find safety in times of distress, and the shadow of which is refreshing to them; and therefore betake themselves to him for shelter, and where they are secure from the wrath of God, and rage of men: he is the rock of ages, in whom is everlasting strength, and is the sure, firm, and everlasting foundation on which the church, and all true believers are laid: he is the foundation of their faith, and hope, and everlasting happiness, and will ever continue; *and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*—*Dr. Gill's Commentary on Matthew xvi. 18.*

NOTE L. Page 65.

“‘From hence,’ as Calvin conceives, ‘the poets drew their fables of the four ages of the world, the golden, the silver, the brazen, and the iron age, by which declension in this place it is signified, that the world always degenerates, and manners grow worse and worse.’ But Hesiod, who lived above 200 years before Daniel, mentioned the four ages of the world:

so that this vision was formed agreeably to the common received notion ; and the common received notion was not first propagated from hence.”—*Bishop Newton on the Prophecies*, Dissert. 13.

NOTE M. Page 65.

“In an ancient book of theirs, written by R. Simeon Ben Jochai, the author interprets this stone, cut out of the mountain without hands, to be the same with him who, in Gen. xlix. 24, is called the Shepherd and Stone of Israel ; as it is by Saadiah Gaon, a later writer ; and in another of their writings, reckoned by them very ancient, it is said that the ninth king (for they speak of ten) shall be the king Messiah, who shall reign from one end of the world to the other, according to that passage, *the stone which smote the image*, &c. ver. 35, and in one of their ancient Midrashes, or expositions, it is interpreted of the king Messiah : and so R. Abraham Seba.”—*Dr. Gill's Commentary on Daniel* ii. 34.

NOTES TO LECTURE IV.

NOTE A. Page 71.

“The Septuagint and Arabic versions place it in the 18th year of his reign, and some are of opinion

that it was after his victories over the Jews, Tyre, Egypt, and others; and that being flushed therewith, in the pride of his heart, ordered this image to be made; and out of the spoils he brought with him from the several countries he had conquered. Mr. Whiston places this fact in the year of the Julian period, 4127, and before Christ 587: and so Dr. Prideaux, who makes it to be in the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar, agreeably to the above versions. Mr. Bedford puts it in the year before Christ, 585."—*Dr. Gill's Commentary, in loco.*

Note B. Page 72.

"Herodotus says, the king's cubit in Babylon was three fingers larger than the usual one; and, according to that, this image must be thirty-five yards high, and three yards and a half broad."—*Ibid.*

NOTE C. Page 73.

"Diodorus tells us, that this image of 40 feet high contained one thousand Babylonish talents of gold, which, according to Pollux, (who, in his Onomasticon, reckons a Babylonish talent to contain 7000 attic drachmas, i. e. 875 ounces,) amounts to three millions and a half of our money. But, if we advance the height of the statue to ninety feet without the pedestal, it will increase the value to a sum incredible; and therefore it is necessary to take the pedestal also into the height mentioned by Daniel."—*Prideaux. Anno 570.*
Dr. Gill, however, observes, that this conjecture of

Prideaux “seems not likely, since the one was between thirty and forty yards high, the other but thirteen or fourteen; the one in the plain of Dura, the other in the temple of Bel.”

NOTE D. Page 74.

Such gross abuses of authority remind us of Shakespeare’s well-expressed abhorrence of tyranny.

“ O it is excellent

To have a giant’s strength ; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.

.

Merciful heaven !

Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
Split’st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak,

Than the soft myrtle—O, but man, proud man !

Drest in a little brief authority ;

Most ignorant of what he’s most assur’d,

His glassy essence,—like an angry ape,

Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,

As make the angels weep : who, with our spleens,

Would all themselves laugh mortal.”

Measure for Measure. Act II.

NOTE E. Page 74.

The precise nature of these different musical instruments can only be conjectured. The sackbut, or sambuca, was a kind of lyre.—*See Dr. Wintle, and Gill, in loco.*

NOTE F. Page 76.

“ This is the first time (verse 6th) that mention is made of *hours* in the sacred Scriptures; it was very probably the invention of the Chaldeans or Babylonians; for Herodotus says the Greeks received the twelve parts of the day from the Babylonians.”—*Gill, in loco.*

NOTE G. Page 78.

“ The hymn of the three children follows after the 23rd verse in Vulg. Gr. Cod. Chis. or LXX. and some other versions, and the verses are marked accordingly; but this is generally now agreed to be a spurious production of much later date; and the necessity or occasion of it seems clearly superseded by the general thanksgiving of the king's at the 28th verse, as well as that at the beginning of the next chapter. Nor from a review of the hymn, however pious and well designed, can we discover the usual style of Daniel, or any resemblance to the other parts of his book. I should rather refer it to some of the apocryphal writers, if it must be accounted ancient, but perhaps it belongs to still later times. Archbishop Secker notes thus, ‘ Nobilius cites from Polychronius, that this hymn was neither in the Heb. nor Syr. Bibles: Ephr. Syr. takes no notice of it; and therefore I apprehend it to have been added in that version which he used since his time. Jerom says it was not in the Hebrew.’”—*Dr. Wintle, in loco.*

The Jews, in their writings, have held disputations

concerning the *absence of Daniel*, during the trial of his friends; but all to no purpose.—See *Lightfoot*, vol. viii. p. 402.

“How Daniel escaped the fiery furnace, which his three friends on that occasion were condemned unto, is made a matter of inquiry by some. That he did not fall down and worship the idol, is most certain; it absolutely disagreeing with the character of that holy religious man, to make himself guilty of so high an offence against God as such a compliance would have amounted unto; either, therefore, he was absent, or else, if present, was not accused. The latter seems most probable: for Nebuchadnezzar having summoned all his princes, counsellors, governors, captains, and all his other officers and ministers, to be present, and assisting at the solemnity of this dedication, it is not likely that Daniel, who was one of the chiefest of them, should be allowed to be absent.”—*Prideaux*, Anno 587.

“The Jews, who do not shew all the respect that is due unto Daniel, say some very idle and foolish things of him, as reasons why he was not present at this time. It is asked, ‘Where did Daniel go?’ says Rab, *to dig a large river in Tiberias*; but Samuel says, to fetch the seed of herbs, food for beasts; and R. Jochanan says, to fetch swine from Alexandria, in Egypt.”—*Dr. Gill*, *in loco*.

NOTE H. Page 81.

“Aben Ezra, upon Psalm ii. 12, ‘Kiss the son,’ confesseth, that this is properly spoken of the Messiah;

but in Midr. Tillin, there is a vehement dispute against true filiation. The same Aben Ezra likewise confesseth, that in Dan. iii. 25, ‘One like the Son of God,’ is to be taken in the same sense with that of Prov. xxxi. 2, ‘*What my son, and what the son of my womb?*’ But Saadias, and R. Solomon understand it of an angel.”—*Lightfoot*, vol. xii. p. 286.

“Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra was a native of Spain, and flourished in the 12th century; his commentaries on the Scriptures, written in an elegant style, are much esteemed, both by Jews and Christians.”—*Horne’s Introduction to the Scriptures*, Vol. II. Part II. p. 189.

NOTE I. Page 82.

“Have the Seventy translated Elohim by a plural word? No: and for a very obvious reason: it would have been contrary to the meaning of Moses, unless they had connected the plural noun with a singular verb, which their language would not bear, nor any other language but the Hebrew. What, then, is the obvious conclusion, but that, if the *plural* form of Elohim is connected with a *singular* verb, it must have been intended to express a *plurality* of persons in *one* God, a plurality of Elohim in one Jehovah It should further be observed, that though the Hebrew Scriptures say there is one Jehovah, as in the passage of Deut. before quoted (vi. 4.), yet they no where say there is one Elohim.”—*Bishop Burgess’s Tracts on the Divinity of Christ*. Edition 1820. Page 46.

“A plurality of persons in the Godhead was a sub-

ject familiar to the Jews before and at the time of our Saviour."—*Ibid.* p. 45.

NOTE K. Page 83.

"To prevent us, indeed, from taking the words in their literal sense, Aben Ezra, and after him Maimonides, are for referring the predicate, walking, not to the Lord, but to his voice; and, by way of confirmation of their criticism, adduce the two texts; 'The voice thereof shall go like a serpent:' 'And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder:' the latter of which is a mere idiom of the dialect; and ought not to have been alleged by Aben Ezra in the decision of this question. But even the more specious of the two examples is wide from the point. In both these the verb is, in *Kal*, signifying, *to go*, or *to move forward*; but in the text before us it is in *Hithpael*, signifying, *to walk*, or, *to move of oneself*; and, as Aben Ezra and Maimonides must have both known, is predicated at all times of a subject which is endowed with spontaneous motion, but more especially, if not exclusively, of man. We cannot, therefore, consistently with the principles of grammar, associate the predicate, *walking*, with *voice*, but only with *Lord God*, as the construction requires. Thus we find it argued in *Bereshith Rabba*: 'R. Colphon said, we have heard that *going* is ascribable to *voice*; as the scripture saith, *And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden*. It is ascribable to *fire*, as the scripture saith: *and the fire went along the ground*. R. Abba bar Cahana said, It is not here

written *going*, but *walking*, that is, bounding and rising, to wit, the radix of the Habitation which was in the lower world.' So R. Solomon Jarchi: '*And they heard*: what did they hear? They heard the voice of the Lord, who was walking in the garden.' So likewise R. Moses Gerundensis, having noticed the gloss of R. Colphon, Aben Ezra, and Maimonides, rejects it to the following effect: 'But according to my opinion, the sense of *walking in the garden*, is to be illustrated from the passages, *And I will walk in the midst of you—And the Lord went away, when he had ceased speaking unto Abraham—I will go, and return unto my place*—it being meant either of the manifestation of the Habitation in that place, or else of its departure from the place, in which it had been manifested.' That the Habitation is the very essence and substance of the Supreme Being is the well-known opinion of R. Moses Gerundensis; and, though the Targumists, Onkelos, and Jonathan, make it the voice of the word of Jehovah, and not of the Habitation, which they heard in the garden; yet are these two expositions perfectly consistent with each other, as the three personalities of the Godhead are inseparably united; and, wherever the Word, or the Metatron manifested himself to the world, there likewise appeared the glory of the Habitation."—*Oxlee on the Trinity and Incarnation*, Vol. II. Chap. 3.

"The earliest mention of the angel, Metatron, by name, is in the Gemara. 'R. Nachman said, Whosoever has the knowledge to answer a Saducean, in the manner of R. Idith, let him answer him; if not, let him hold his tongue. The Saducean said to

R. Idith, It is written; and he said unto Moses, Come up unto Jehovah. The expression should have been, Come up unto me. He replied, This is the Metatron, whose name is as the name of his Master; according to the scripture, For my name is in him. If so, let us worship him.'"—*Ibid.* Vol. I. Chap. 8.

NOTE L. Page 85.

"It is not known, with certainty, at what time Onkelos flourished, nor of what nation he was: Professor Eichorn conjectures that he was a native of Babylon. The generally received opinion is, that he was a proselyte to Judaism, and a disciple of the celebrated Rabbi Hillel, who flourished about fifty years before the christian era, and consequently that Onkelos was contemporary with our Saviour."—*Hartwell Horne's Introduction to the Scriptures*, Vol. II. Part I. page 34.

NOTE M. Page 85.

The age of the Targumist, Jonathan, is much disputed; but he most probably lived either before or about the time of our Saviour.

NOTE N. Page 85.

The comment of Dr. Lightfoot upon this passage in the 18th of Genesis is singular enough. He observes: "The three persons in the Trinity, in the shape of three men, appear to Abraham, and dine with him, and eat the first flesh that is mentioned eaten in all

the scripture The Son and the Holy Ghost come into Sodom to destroy it; and now they are called angels, because they were sent by the Father.”—*Works*, Vol. II. page 342.

The opinion of Philo Judæus on the same passage is as follows; “For it was with great earnestness, expedition, and zeal that Abraham went and gave directions to his wife Sarai, when God, escorted on each side by two personages, from on high, whose attributes were power and goodness, (the Divinity in the middle being in union with the other two,) impressed a three-fold appearance upon the soul of Abraham who beheld them.”—*Bryant's Philo Judæus*, page 198.

Mr. Bryant thus offers his own sentiments: “The Logos in the Scriptures is described as appearing to Abraham, and to other patriarchs, in a human form: and to this, I imagine, Philo alludes, when he says, ὁ κατ’ εἰκὼνα ἀνθρώπου. This reading has the sanction of Origen, who tells us, that Philo wrote, περὶ τοῦ μὴ ὡς ἀνθρώπον λεγέσθαι εἶναι τὸν Θεόν. Philo, in the page above mentioned, says, that *man was born after the image of the Word*. There must, therefore, have been, however partial, yet a reciprocal likeness.”—Page 103.

R. Bechai also has commented on the above scripture: “In Beresheth Rabba, it is likewise affirmed, *wherever you find Michael, there, also, is the glory of the Habitation*: and therefore he (Abraham) no sooner saw them, (the three angels,) than he ran after them, as though he were running after the Habitation. . . . And he said, *My Lord, if now I may have found grace in thine eyes*: according to the letter of

the text, he styles them all lords: but says to the greatest among them, *If now I may find grace in thine eyes, &c.* And this would be its interpretation agreeably to the opinion, that the term, *Adonai*, in this place, were a profane or temporal title. But, seeing that in all copies we find it pointed with the Kamets; it is our duty to state, that it is a sacred appellation, and that he thus accosts them by the name of their master. It is highly probable, indeed, that it was Michael only whom he thus addressed by the name of his master. The reason why this name, (*Adonai*) when sacred, is pointed with the *Kamets*, is matter of notoriety."—*Oxlee*, Vol. II. Chap. 3.

Again: "The celebrated R. Solomon Jarchi, not more remarkable as an expositor for his perfect knowledge of the Talmud, than for his close adherence to the literal sense of scripture; wherever there occurs any mention of the divine image of man, or of the Deity conferring with the fathers in visible shape, generally illustrates the text in such a manner as to favour the present argument. This is acknowledged by at least one of his many commentators, R. Jehuda Lib. Ben Obadiah: 'But as to the gloss of Rashi (Jarchi) in the verse following, where his words are, *the image of the image of his Maker*, literally inculcating that Jehovah hath an image; that do you interpret thus: In the very image in which he appeared to the prophets, as often as he was manifested to them did he create man; but Jehovah himself hath no likeness at all, by no means.' That Jehovah, then, to manifest his presence to the patriarchs and prophets, did actually assume the image of the species, is a

doctrine to which the Jew no less than the Christian must yield his assent."—*Ibid.*

Many interesting passages might be quoted from various authors, especially from Philo, confirmatory of what has already been advanced. The work of Mr. Oxlee (the value of which is attested by the late Bishop Burgess in his Tracts on the Divinity of Christ) abounds with copious extracts from Rabbinical writers, demonstrating the opinion of the ancient Jews, that there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead, and that, on certain occasions, the Deity assumed the appearance of man. Let one or two more citations suffice : " R. Menachim speaks in the following terms of the intent of the sacrificial rites : ' The priest, whilst he ascends the altar, is found raising up his soul from the lofty One to the lofty One ; and this is the mystery of the altar.' By these terms we can only understand the Father and the Son ; and indeed, the Rabbii are sufficiently explicit in declaring that this is their meaning. The idea, then, of the passage, when divested of its obscurity, will be, the priest rises in contemplation to the Most High, through the merits of the Most High, his only begotten Son."—*Faber's Bampton Lectures*, Vol. II. Chap. 5.

" The great Father of all gave this extraordinary gift to that most ancient and principal of all angels, his holy Word, that he should stand midway, and separate the creature from the Creator. This Word, (the Logos) is accordingly the Intercessor for mortal man, who is always tending to corruption : and he is appointed a Messenger and Legate from the Supreme Lord

to his subjects.”—*Philo, quoted by Bryant, page 87*; see also pages 17, 20, 21, 130, &c.

NOTE O. Page 85.

A careful perusal of the Holy Scriptures will surely convince us that the ancients were often favoured with a personal appearance of the Son of God, in the likeness of that nature which he subsequently took into his divinity. It is manifest that the “angel of Jehovah” so often mentioned, is co-equal with Jehovah. In the 22nd chapter of Genesis, containing the account of Abraham offering up his son Isaac, we read, “The angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from *me*. . . . And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, *By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah,*” &c. Is it not evident that *two persons* are here mentioned, and yet that the angel of Jehovah is Jehovah himself?

Again, in Exodus xxiii. “Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: *for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him.*” (Compare Luke v. 21—24.) The learned Dr. Gill thus comments upon the above words: “Aben

Ezra observes, that some say this is the book of the law, because it is said, *my name is in him*, or *in the midst of it*; others say, the ark of the covenant; but he says this angel is Michael; and if indeed by Michael is intended the increated angel, as he always is in scripture, he is right: Jarchi remarks, that their Rabbins say, this is Metatron, whose name is as the name of his master; Metatron, by gematry, is Shaddai, which signifies almighty, or all-sufficient, and is an epithet of the divine Being; and Metatron seems to be a corruption of the word *mediator*: some of the ancient Jewish writers say, this is the angel that is the Redeemer of the world, and the keeper of the children of men: and Philo, the Jew, applies the word unto the divine Logos, and says, ‘he (God) uses the divine Word as the guide of the way; for the oracle is, *behold, I send my angel*,’ &c.: which agrees with what follows: *to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.*”

Exodus xxiv. “Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: *and they saw the God of Israel*: and there was *under his feet*, as it were, a paved work,” &c.

Joshua v. “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, *there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand*: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of Jehovah am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and *did worship*, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant? And the

captain of Jehovah's host said unto Joshua, *Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy.*"—(Compare Exodus iii. 5.)

The ensuing chapter is a continuation of the foregoing narrative. This scripture is improperly disjointed. In the 2nd verse of the 6th chapter, the captain of the host is expressly called Jehovah; and here we have a striking instance of God appearing on earth in the similitude of man.—*See the Commentary of Dr. Adam Clarke, in loco.*

The Book of Judges affords two other examples forcibly illustrative of our point. In the 6th chapter it is written, "And there came an angel of Jehovah, and *sat under an oak* And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, (Gideon,) and said unto him, Jehovah is with thee And *Jehovah looked upon him*; and *Jehovah* said unto him, Surely I will be with thee and the angel of God said unto him, &c. . . . Then the angel of Jehovah put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there arose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of Jehovah departed out of his sight. And when Gideon perceived that he was an angel of Jehovah, Gideon said, Alas! O Lord God! for because I have seen an angel of Jehovah face to face. And Jehovah said unto him, Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die."—See Genesis xxxii. 24—30.

The other example is that of the angel who appeared to Manoah, for an account of which see Judges xiii. Here, likewise, the *human form* was assumed.

The interview of Abraham with Melchizedec is familiar to every reader of the Bible. In the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Genesis, it is related: "Melchizedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth." St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, chap. v. observes, with respect to Melchizedec, "*Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered;*" and, again, in chap. vii. he thus mentions the same person, "This Melchizedec, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, being by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is, King of Peace; *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life;* but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually."

It is manifest, from these scriptures, that this is an extraordinary person; and, if we remember, that the words in Genesis, "Melchizedec, king of Salem," literally should be rendered "King of Righteousness, King of Peace," we should perhaps have no difficulty in deciding a question which has been considerably agitated. Who has ever visited this earth, in the garb of mortality, "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," except the Lord Jesus Christ, "Jehovah our *Righteousness*," (Jer. xxiii. 6.) "The everlasting Father, the Prince of *Peace*," (Isaiah ix. 6,) who has emphatically declared of himself, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it,

and was glad;" and again, "Before Abraham was, I am?" (John viii. 56, 58.)

Upon what *authority* has "Salem" been construed into "Jerusalem?" The most learned will be baffled in their attempts to give a satisfactory answer to this question. In no part of the Word of God is *Jerusalem* called *Salem*. The 76th Psalm is no exception; "In Salem, also, is his tabernacle:" for this passage may be rendered, "His tabernacle, also, is in *peace*;" according to the Septuagint, καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν εἰρήνῃ ὁ τόπος αὐτοῦ. That the Jews should have entered into frivolous discussions concerning the lineage of Melchizedec does not surprise us, or that they should have found him a parent in the person of Shem, the son of Noah; but that Jerome, or any other christian writer having in his possession the testimony of St. Paul, should have followed the same track, and have adopted the opinion that Melchizedec had "beginning of days," which has been the case with every mortal, when the scripture positively asserts that he was "without father, without mother, without descent (or pedigree), having neither *beginning of days*, nor end of life," does indeed appear to us somewhat strange.

As we cannot here pursue this argument, we must refer our readers, if they desire to see the subject ably treated, to the valuable work of Mr. Bryant, already mentioned in these Notes.

If we admit that Melchizedec was Christ, we have another remarkable instance of Deity assuming the likeness of man, previous to the incarnation; and an irrefragable proof of the divine nature of our Redeemer.

NOTE P. Page 86.

“ Now these words have been spoken, to shew that the Son of God, and Apostle, is Jesus Christ, who before was the Word, and appeared sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the image of incorporeal beings, but hath now, by the will of God, and for the sake of mankind, been made man, and endured whatsoever the demons caused to be inflicted upon him by the senseless Jews: who, when they find it expressly declared in the writings of Moses, ‘ And the angel of God spake to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, and said, I am he who is ; the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,’ say that it was the Father and Creator of all things who so spake. Whence, also, the prophetic spirit reproached them, saying, ‘ But Israel doth not know me, and the people doth not consider me.’ And again, Jesus, while he was with them, said, as we have already shewn, ‘ No one knoweth the Father but the Son ; neither knoweth any one the Son but the Father, and they to whomsoever the Son shall reveal it.’ The Jews, therefore, who always thought that it was the Father of all things who spake to Moses, whereas he who spake to him was the Son of God, who is also called the Angel and the Apostle, are justly upbraided, both by the prophetic spirit, and by Christ himself, as knowing neither the Father nor the Son. For they who say that the Son is the Father, are proved not to know the Father, nor that the Father of all things hath a Son, who, being the first-begotten Word of God, is also God. He also formerly appeared to Moses and the prophets in the form of fire, and of an

incorporeal image ; but now in the time of your empire, as we have already said, was made man, and born of a virgin, according to the will of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe in him. He permitted himself, also, to be set at naught, and to suffer, that by dying and rising again, he might conquer death. Moreover, when he spake out of the bush to Moses, saying, ‘I am he who is ; the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and the God of thy fathers,’ he intimated that they who were dead did still exist, and were men of Christ himself. For they were the first of all men who diligently sought after God, Abraham being the father of Isaac, and Isaac of Jacob, as Moses also hath recorded.”—*Justin Martyr’s Apology*, Chap. 83. Chevallier’s Translation.

NOTE Q. Page 88.

“The several expressions here used are meant to shew, that not the least injury was received from the fire. The expressions rise in fine order, and the climax is beautiful. The fire not only had no prevailing power over their bodies, but neither was a hair of their head burnt, nor their flowing robes singed, nor even the smell of fire had passed on them. Compare this with Isaiah xliii. 2. Strabo, lib. iv. intimates, that persons inspired by the goddess Feronia passed bare-footed over burning coals without injury. So Virg. in *Æn.* xi.

Medium freti pietate per ignem
Cultores multa premunt vestigia pruna.

There is a curious passage in the 21st chapter of the Koran, which the commentators seem to have improved with a variety of marvellous fictions, some of which, as well as the story itself, are probably borrowed from the history before us. Abraham is reproving his father's people for idolatry; and though they seem at first convinced from his arguments, they soon relapse into their former obstinacy, and order their teacher to be burnt. 'They said, Burn him, and avenge your gods; if ye do this it will be well. And when Abraham was cast into the fire, we said, O fire, be thou cold, and a preservation unto Abraham. And they sought to lay a plot against him; but we caused them to be the sufferers.'—*Sale's Kor.* Vol. II. page 158." *Dr. Wintle on verse 27.*

Matthew Henry thus comments on the close of this chapter; "He (Nebuchadnezzar) issues out a royal edict, straitly forbidding any to speak evil of the God of Israel, v. 29. We have reason to think that both the sins and the troubles of Israel had given great occasion, though no just occasion, to the Chaldeans to blaspheme the God of Israel, and, it is likely, Nebuchadnezzar himself had encouraged it; but now, though he is no true convert, nor is wrought upon to worship him, yet he resolves never to speak ill of him again, nor to suffer others to do so; *whoever shall speak any thing amiss, any error, (so some,) or rather any reproach or blasphemy, whoever shall speak with contempt of the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, they shall be counted the worst of malefactors, and dealt with accordingly, they shall be cut in pieces, as Agag was by the sword of Samuel, and*

their houses shall be demolished, and made a *dung-hill*. The miracle now wrought by the power of this God in defence of his worshippers, publicly in the sight of the thousands of Babylon, was a sufficient justification of this edict. And it would contribute much to the ease of the Jews in their captivity, to be by this law screened from the fiery darts of reproach and blasphemy, with which otherwise they would have been continually annoyed. Note. It is a great mercy to the church, and a good point gained, when its enemies, though they have not their hearts turned, yet have their mouths stopped, and their tongues tied. If a heathen prince laid such a restraint upon the proud lips of blasphemers, much more should christian princes do it; nay, in this thing, one would think that men should be a law to themselves, and that those that have so little love to God, that they care not to speak well of him, yet could never find in their hearts, for we are sure they could never find cause, to *speak any thing amiss* of him."—*Commentary, in loco.*

NOTES TO LECTURE V.

NOTE A. Page 94.

The general interpretation of these words, in the 19th Psalm, is different from that here adopted. They

will admit of the two meanings. The authorized translation, inserting the adverb "*where*," intimates that the idea of the Psalmist was,—There is no part of the world wherein the voice of the beauteous works of nature is not heard. Our metrical version embraces the same view :

“ Their pow’rful language to no realm
Or region is confined ;
’Tis nature’s voice, and understood
Alike by all mankind.”

The following lines, however, from the pen of Addison, give the other rendering, and afford a delightful subject for meditation and improvement :

“ What though, in solemn silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball !
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found !
In reason’s ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
‘ The hand that made us is divine.’ ”

See the Spectator. No. 465.

Perhaps it was the above Psalm that suggested the following passage to Clement.

“ The heavens, peaceably revolving by his appointment, are subject unto him. Day and night perform the course appointed by him, in no wise interrupting one another. By his ordinance, the sun and moon, and all the companies of stars, roll on, in harmony, without any deviation, within the bounds allotted to them. In obedience to his will, the pregnant earth yields her fruit plentifully in due season to man and beast, and to

all creatures that are therein; not hesitating nor changing any thing which was decreed by him. The unsearchable secrets of the abyss, and the untold judgments of the lower world, are restrained by the same commands. The hollow depth of the vast sea, gathered together into its several collections by his word, passes not its allotted bounds; but as he commanded, so doth it. For he said, ‘Hitherto shalt thou come, and thy waves shall be broken within thee.’ The ocean, impassable to mankind, and the worlds which are beyond it, are governed by the same commands of their Master. Spring and summer, and autumn and winter, give place peaceably to one another. The winds, in their stations, perform their service without interruption, each in his appointed season. The ever-flowing fountains, ministering both to pleasure and to health, without ceasing put forth their breasts to support the life of man.”—*The Epistle of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians*. Chap. 20. Chevallier’s Translation.

NOTE B. Page 96.

“ This and the two following verses are annexed to the preceding chapter in the Hebrew Bible, and in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; as if the author of the division of the chapters thought that Nebuchadnezzar proposed, by this public proclamation, to celebrate the praise of the Lord, on account of the wonderful deliverance of the three Jews from the fiery furnace; whereas they are a preface to a narrative of a dream, and an event which concerned

himself, and most properly begin a new chapter, as they do in the Syriac and Arabic versions."—*Dr. Gill's Commentary*.

NOTE C. Page 97.

After the dream, one year elapsed before it *began* to be fulfilled, and then it was seven years in being entirely accomplished.

NOTE D. Page 103.

“ This point, I think, is generally agreed upon, that Nineveh was taken and destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians; these two rebelling and uniting together, subverted the Assyrian empire: but authors differ much about the time when Nineveh was taken, and about the king of Assyria, in whose reign it was taken, and even about the persons who had the command in this expedition. Herodotus affirms, that it was taken by Cyaxares, king of the Medes; St. Jerome, after the Hebrew Chronicle, asserts that it was taken by Nabuchodonosor, king of the Babylonians; but these accounts may be easily reconciled, for Cyaxares and Nabuchodonosor might take it with their joint forces, as they actually did, according to that which is written in the Book of Tobit, xiv. 15. if the Assuerus, in Tobit, be the same (as there is great reason to think him the same,) with the Cyaxares of Herodotus; ‘ But before Tobias died, he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor and Assuerus: and before his death he

rejoiced over Nineveh.' Josephus, who saith, in one place, that 'the empire of the Assyrians was dissolved by the Medes,' saith, in another, that 'the Medes and Babylonians dissolved the empire of the Assyrians.' Herodotus himself saith, 'that the Medes took Nineveh, and subdued the Assyrians, except the Babylonian portion,' the reason of which was, the Babylonians were their allies and confederates. Ctesias, and after him, Diodorus Siculus, ascribe the taking of Nineveh, and the subversion of the Assyrian Empire to Arbaces the Mede, assisted by Belesis the Babylonian."—*Bishop Newton on the Prophecies*. Dissert. IX.; and see *Rollin's Ancient History*. B. III. ch. 2.

NOTE E. Page 103.

"The Sidonians, (says Justin, xviii. 3,) when their city was taken by the king of Ascalon, betook themselves to their ships, and landed and built Tyre."—*Bp. Lowth on Isaiah*. Chap. xxiii.

NOTE F. Page 105.

"Megasthenes also, in his fourth book of his Accounts of India, makes mention of these things, and thereby endeavours to shew that this king (Nebuchadnezzar) exceeded Hercules in fortitude, and in the greatness of his actions; for he saith that he conquered a great part of Libya and Iberia. Diocles also, in the second book of his Accounts of Persia, mentions this king; as does Philostratus, in his Ac-

counts, both of India and Phœnicia, say that this king besieged Tyre thirteen years, while at the same time Ethbaal reigned at Tyre."—*Josephus's Antiquities*. Book X. Chap. XI.

NOTE G. Page 105.

Prideaux. Anno 573.—“And here I cannot but observe, how exactly the chronology of the Phœnician annals agreeth with that of the Holy Scriptures. Ezekiel placeth the taking of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar in the twenty-sixth year of the captivity of Jèhoiachin. For, in the first month, and in the first day of the month, of the twenty-seventh year, he speaketh, (xxix. 17, 18, &c.) of that city as newly taken by Nebuchadnezzar; and therefore the taking of it must have been in the year before, that is, in the twenty-sixth of the said captivity. This fell in the thirty-second year of Nebuchadnezzar, according to the Babylonish account; from which year, according to Ptolemy's Canon, the first year of Cyrus, at Babylon, will be the thirty-sixth, and so, according to the Phœnician annals, will be exactly the same. For according to them, after the taking of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar, Baal had the government of it ten years, Ecnibal two months, Chalbes ten months, Abbar three months, Mitgonus and Gerastratus six years, Balator one year, Merball four years, and Hirom twenty years; in whose fourteenth year, say the same annals, Cyrus began his empire. And putting all these together, the fourteenth of Hirom, will be exactly the thirty-sixth year from the thirty-second of Nebuchadnezzar,

which was the twenty-sixth of the captivity of Jehoiachin, the year, according to Ezekiel, in which Tyre was taken. And therefore it doth hereby appear, that the said Phœnician annals place the taking of Tyre in the very same year that Ezekiel doth: for the twenty-sixth year from the captivity of Jehoiachin, computed downward, in which Ezekiel placeth it, and the thirty-sixth year from the fourteenth of Hirom, computed upward, in which the Phœnician annals place it, will be exactly the same year.”—See *Josephus against Apion*. B. I. Sect. 21.

NOTE H. Page 105.

“Tyre, after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, recovered, as it is here foretold, (Isaiah xxiii.) its ancient trade, wealth, and grandeur; as it did likewise after a second destruction by Alexander. It became Christian early with the rest of the neighbouring countries. St. Paul himself found many Christians there. Acts xxi. 4. It suffered much in the Diocletian persecution. It was an archbishoprick under the patriarchate of Jerusalem, with fourteen bishopricks under its jurisdiction. It continued Christian till it was taken by the Saracens in 639; was recovered by the Christians in 1124; but in 1280 was conquered by the Mamelukes; and afterwards taken from them by the Turks in 1516. Since that time it has sunk into utter decay; is now a mere ruin; a bare rock; ‘a place to spread nets upon,’ as the prophet Ezekiel foretold it should be. Chap. xxvi. 14.”—*Bp. Lowth on Isaiah*.

Perhaps I may take the liberty of observing that the learned author, just cited, has not expressed himself so correctly, respecting Tyre, as he might have done. *That* Tyre, which was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, never afterwards gained an ascendancy, and was called Palæ Tyrus, or Old Tyre. It was the *insular* Tyre which rose into future celebrity, and which, doubtless, is the city intended by the Bishop. "Old Tyre was built on the continent, by the Sidonians, 1252 B. C. It was besieged by Salmaneser, 719 B. C.; and by Nebuchadnezzar, 572 B. C. The latter took the place after a siege of thirteen years; but the greater part of the inhabitants had previously fled with their effects to a neighbouring island, and founded the city described in the text."—*Gillies' History of Greece*, 2d edition, vol. iv. p. 293.

NOTE I. Page 108.

"The decree of the watchers is at verse 24 the decree of the Most High, and it seems represented as the result of the Council of Heaven, which one more favoured angel was commissioned to execute; see verse 13."—*Dr. Wintle in loco*.

"Some think, by the decree of the watchers, is intended, God's fulfilling the counsel of his messengers, (see Isaiah xliv. 26,) where counsel means purpose, that is, his own purpose declared by them. Others think the watchers a higher order of angels, and the holy ones a lower, but this is without proof: others, the angels acting with God, to make by the united host a

more powerful impression on Nebuchadnezzar."—*Secker*. Quoted by Wintle.

NOTE K. Page 109.

Josephus expressly mentions "seven years" as being the period of Nebuchadnezzar's distraction; whereupon Mr. Whiston makes the following remark:—"So far we know, by Ptolemy's Canon, a contemporary record, as well as by Josephus, that he reigned in all forty-three years, that is, eight years after we meet with any account of his actions; one of the last of which was the thirteen years' siege of Tyre; yet were his actions before so remarkable, both in sacred and profane authors, that such a vacuity of eight years at the least, at the latter end of his reign, must be allowed to agree very well with Daniel's accounts, that after a seven years' brutal life, he might return to his reason, and to the exercise of his royal authority, for one whole year at least before his death."—*Ant. Book X. Ch. x. Note.*

NOTE L. Page 109.

"It is well known that the roofs of the buildings in the East were flat or plain, over which the inhabitants used to walk for pleasure. 'The palace of Koscam,' says Mr. Bruce, (vol. iv. p. 271,) 'consists of a square tower of three stories, with a flat parapet roof or terrace, and battlements about it.' But 'the palace of Gondar, and all its contiguous buildings, are sur-

rounded by a substantial stone wall thirty feet high, with battlements upon the outer wall, and a parapet roof between the outer and inner, by which you can go along the whole and look into the street. The four sides of this wall are above an English mile and half in length.' (Vol. iii. p. 380.) In a situation like one of these was Nebuchadnezzar placed in the passage before us, in order to take a more full view of his city, and to enjoy the fresh air, according to Sir John Chardin, that is, to gratify his ease and pride; when he pronounced the following extravagant soliloquy."—*Dr. Wintle, in loco.*

Abydenus (in Eusebius) represents Nebuchadnezzar, *ως αναβας επι τα βασιλεια, as ascending upon his royal palace*, where, "being under a divine afflatus, he foretold the destruction of the Babylonian empire by a Persian Mule (meaning Cyrus), and by a Mede, and immediately, *ηφανισο*, he disappeared; which some have understood of this time of his madness, which quickly followed upon this dream."—*Dr. Gill, in loco.*

NOTE M. Page 111.

"It has been usually supposed, that the punishment inflicted on Nebuchadnezzar was that species of madness which is called lycanthropy. But it should seem from the account, that the divine threats were fulfilled in a more exact and literal sense; and that Nebuchadnezzar was actually driven from society, till his affections were brutalized, and his appearance changed. Scaliger conceives, that this metamorphosis is alluded to by Abydenus, who remarks, on the au-

thority of the Chaldean writers, that Nebuchadnezzar, after having uttered a prophecy relative to the destruction of the Babylonish empire by Cyrus, *disappeared*.”—*Bp. Gray's Key*, page 410. Note.

NOTE N. Page 111.

Although the Roman poet has put into the mouth of Dido the following beautiful sentence:

Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco;

Not ignorant of misfortune, I learn to succour the distressed;

yet is it certain that national efforts to provide for, and afford comfort to, the children of adversity, were unknown, until men were influenced by the benign spirit of the gospel.

NOTE O. Page 111.

Within the walls of Babylon there were many fields. “When Alexander came to Babylon, Curtius tells us, no more than ninety furlongs of it was then built; which can no otherwise be understood than of so much in length; and if we allow the breadth to be as much as the length, (which is the utmost that can be allowed,) it will follow, that no more than eight thousand one hundred square furlongs were then built upon: but the whole space within the walls contained fourteen thousand four hundred square furlongs; and therefore there must have been six thousand three hundred square furlongs that were unbuilt, which

Curtius tells us were ploughed and sown."—*Prideaux's Connection.* Anno 570.

NOTE P. Page 112.

"After he had continued in the wilderness the fore-mentioned interval of time, while no one durst attempt to seize his kingdom during those seven years, he *prayed* to God that he might recover his kingdom, and he returned to it."—*Jos. Ant.* B. X. Chap. 10.

NOTE Q. Page 113.

"Anno 562. Nebuchadnezzar 43. After this he lived only one year, having reigned, according to the Babylonish account, from the death of his father, forty-three years; and according to the Jewish account, from his first coming with an army into Syria, forty-five years. His death happened about the end of the year, a little before the conclusion of the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin. He was one of the greatest princes that had reigned in the East for many ages before him. Megasthenes prefers him for his valour to Hercules. But his greatness, riches, and power, did in nothing more appear than in his prodigious works at Babylon, above described, which, for many ages after, were spoken of as the wonders of the world. He is said, at his death, to have prophesied of the coming of the Persians, and their bringing of the Babylonians in subjection to them. But in this he spake no more than what he had been informed of by Daniel the prophet, and, in the interpretation of his

dreams, been assured by him should speedily come to pass, as accordingly it did, within twenty-three years after."—*Prideaux's Connection*.

NOTE R. Page 114.

"We presume not to decide upon the real character and final state of Nebuchadnezzar. Doubtless, a powerful influence had been exerted in subduing the proud and rebellious opposition of his heart against God; but it may be questioned whether the change was universal and abiding. At least, we know that many a haughty sinner has been so intimidated or softened by extreme suffering, as to make public confession of his guilt, and to recommend the religion he had before persecuted, who yet never became a true convert. Let us suspect and try ourselves, and while we allow that it is not enough to reform the life from gross iniquities, let us pray that we may possess 'the power of godliness.'

"But though caution be necessary, we are inclined to admit the king of Babylon into the list of true penitents. We dare not deny the mercy of God to the most presumptuous offenders; and in the present instance, it must be acknowledged, there were many very favourable appearances, and such effects as are usually thought the genuine fruits of repentance. On this charitable supposition we are constrained to cry out, 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' We admire and praise the riches of that grace which can subdue and pardon so obdurate a sinner. We adore the condescension of that glorious Personage, who is

‘the repairer of the breach,’ and has opened, for those who have been most abandoned, a way of access to God through his own blood. Let those, ‘who have received the atonement,’ stand forward, as Nebuchadnezzar, to confess their obligations, and invite others to join with them, in giving all blessing and honour unto him, who has done so great things for them. They can tell from what a depth of guilt and misery he has redeemed them, and they will number amongst their most valuable mercies those painful dispensations, which tended to abase their pride, and to produce in them ‘the obedience of faith.’”—*Robinson’s Scripture Characters*, Vol. I. p. 617.

NOTES TO LECTURE VI.

NOTE A. Page 117.

“He (Laborosoarchod) is not named in the canon of Ptolemy; for it is the method of that canon to ascribe all the year to him that was king in the beginning of it, how soon soever he died after, and not to reckon the reign of the successor, but from the first day of the year ensuing; and therefore, if any king reigned in the interim, and did not live to the beginning of

the next year, his name was not put into the canon at all. And this was the case of Laborosoarchod: for Neriglissar, his father, being slain in battle, in the beginning of the spring, the nine months of his son's reign ended before the next year began; and therefore, the whole of that year is reckoned to the last of Neriglissar, and the beginning of the next belonged to his successor: and this was the reason that he is not at all mentioned in that canon."—*Prideaux*. Anno 556.

The succession of kings upon the Chaldean throne is given by Berosus as follows: "Nabuchodonosor departed this life, when he had reigned 43 years; whereupon his son, Evilmerodach, obtained the kingdom. He governed public affairs after an illegal and impure manner, and had a plot laid against him by Neriglissoor, his sister's husband, and was slain by him when he had reigned but two years. After he was slain, Neriglissoor, the person who plotted against him, succeeded him in the kingdom, and reigned four years; his son, Laborosoarchod, obtained the kingdom, though he was but a child, and kept it nine months; but by reason of the very ill temper and ill practices he exhibited to the world, a plot was laid against him also by his friends, and he was tormented to death. After his death, the conspirators got together, and by common consent put the crown upon the head of Nabonnedus, a man of Babylon."—*Cited by Josephus against Apion*, Book I. Sect. 20.

NOTE B. Page 118.

“After him succeeded Nabonadius, and reigned 17 years. Berosus calls him Nabonnedus; Megasthenes, Nabonnidochus; Herodotus, Labynetus; and Josephus, Naboandelus, who, he saith, is the same with Belshazzar He is on all hands agreed to have been the last of the Babylonish kings therefore he must have been the same who, in scripture, is called Belshazzar. He was of the seed of Nebuchadnezzar; for he is called his son, and Nebuchadnezzar is said to be his father. (See also 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20; and Jer. xxvii. 7.) This last king of Babylon is said, by Herodotus, to be son to the great queen Nitocris; and therefore she must have been the wife of a king of Babylon to make her so; and he could have been none other than Evilmerodach: for by that king of Babylon only could she have a son that was son’s son to Nebuchadnezzar. And therefore, putting all this together, it appears that this Nabonadius, the last king of Babylon, was the same with him that in scripture is called Belshazzar, and that he was the son of Evilmerodach, by Nitocris his queen, and so son’s son to Nebuchadnezzar. And that whereas he is called the son of Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. v., and Nebuchadnezzar is there called his father; this is to be understood in the large sense, wherein any ancestor upward is often called father, and any descendant, downward, son, according to the usual style of scripture.”—*Prideaux*. Anno 555.

NOTE C. Page 119.

“ These two chapters (Isaiah xiii. xiv.) . . . contain one entire prophecy, foretelling the destruction of Babylon by the Medes and Persians; delivered, probably in the reign of Ahaz, about 200 years before the completion of it. . . . And the Medes, who are expressly mentioned as the principal agents in the overthrow of the Babylonian monarchy . . . were, at this time, an inconsiderable people, having been in a state of anarchy ever since the fall of the great Assyrian empire, of which they had made a part, under Sardanapalus, and did not become a kingdom till about the seventeenth of Hezekiah.”—*Bishop Lowth*. “ It is remarkable, that Xenophon makes Cyrus open a speech to his army, and in particular to the Medes, who made the principal part of it, with praising them for their disregard of riches. *Ἄνδρες Μηδοί, καὶ πάντες οἱ παρόντες, ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς οἶδα σαφῶς, ὅτι ὅτε χρημάτων δεόμενοι σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐξηλθετε:—* ‘ Ye Medes, and others, who now hear me, I well know that you have not accompanied me in this expedition with a view of *acquiring wealth*.’ ”—*Ibid*.

NOTE D. Page 121.

“ He is supposed to have been the same with Nimrod, and to have been called Bel, from his dominion, and Nimrod, from his rebellion: for Bel, or Baal, which is the same name, signifieth *lord*, and Nimrod, a *rebel*, in the Jewish and Chaldean languages: the former

was his Babylonish name, by reason of his empire in that place, and the latter his scripture name, by reason of his rebellion, in revolting from God to follow his own wicked designs."—*Prideaux*. Anno 570.

NOTE E. Page 122.

“And, besides these, there were also four half streets, which were built but of one side, as having the wall on the other. These went round the four sides of the city next the walls, and were each of them two hundred feet broad, and the rest were about one hundred and fifty. By these streets thus crossing each other, the whole city was cut out into six hundred and seventy-six squares, each of which was four furlongs and a half on every side, that is, two miles and a quarter in compass. Round these squares, on every side, towards the streets, stood the houses, all built three or four stories high, and beautified with all manner of adornments towards the streets. The space within, in the middle of each square, was all void ground, employed for yards, gardens, and other such uses.”—*Ibid*.

NOTE F. Page 122.

“For the farther securing of the country, Nebuchadnezzar built, also, prodigious banks of brick and bitumen on each side of the river, to keep it within its channel, which were carried along from the head of the said canals down to the city, and some way below it. But the most wonderful part of the work was

within the city itself; for there, on each side of the river, he built from the bottom of it a great wall, for its banks, of brick and bitumen, which was of the same thickness with the walls of the city; and, over against every street that crossed the said river, he made, on each side, a brazen gate in the said wall, and stairs leading down from it to the river, from whence the citizens used to pass by boat from one side to the other, which was the only passage they had over the river, till the bridge was built, which I have above mentioned. The gates were open by day, but always shut by night. And this prodigious work was carried on, on both sides of the river, to the length of one hundred and sixty furlongs, which is twenty miles of our measure, and therefore must have been began two miles and a half above the city, and continued down two miles and a half below it; for through the city was no more than fifteen miles.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE G. Page 122.

“Next this temple, on the same east side of the river, stood the old palace of the kings of Babylon, being two miles in compass. Exactly over against it, on the other side of the river, stood the new palace; and this was that which Nebuchadnezzar built. It was four times as big as the former, as being eight miles in compass. It was surrounded with three walls, one within another, and strongly fortified, according to the way of those times.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE H. Page 123.

“ These eight towers being as so many stories one above another, were each of them seventy-five feet high, and in them were many great rooms with arched roofs, supported by pillars The uppermost story of all was that which was most sacred Over the whole, on the top of the tower, was an observatory, by the benefit of which it was that the Babylonians advanced their skill in astronomy beyond all other nations For when Alexander took Babylon, Calisthenes, the philosopher, who accompanied him thither, found they had astronomical observations for one thousand nine hundred and three years backward from that time: which carrieth up the account as high as the one hundred and fifteenth year after the flood, which was within fifteen years after the tower of Babel was built. This account Calisthenes sent from Babylon into Greece to his master Aristotle, as Simplicius, from the authority of Porphyry, delivers it unto us in his 2nd Book De Cœlo.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE I. Page 124.

“ This stood till the time of Xerxes, (B. c. 479 :) but he, on his return from his Grecian expedition, demolished the whole of it, and laid it all in rubbish: having first plundered it of all its immense riches, among which were several images or statues of massy gold.”—*Ibid.* See Jer. li. 44. Also Lecture IV. p. 72.

NOTE K. Page 124.

“What was most wonderful in it were the hanging gardens, which were of so celebrated a name among the Greeks. They contained a square of four plethra (that is, of four hundred feet) on every side, and were carried up aloft into the air, in the manner of several large terraces, one above another, till the highest equalled the height of the walls of the city. The ascent was from terrace to terrace, by stairs ten feet wide. The whole pile was sustained by vast arches built upon arches, one above another, and strengthened by a wall, surrounding it on every side, of twenty-two feet in thickness on the top of the arches were first laid large flat stones, sixteen feet long, and four broad, and over them was a layer of reed, mixed with a great quantity of bitumen, over which were two rows of bricks, closely cemented together by plaster, and then over all were laid thick sheets of lead: and all this floorage was contrived to keep the moisture of the mould from running away down through the arches. The mould or earth laid hereon was of that depth, as to have room enough for the greatest trees to take rooting in it; and such were planted all over it in every terrace, as were also all other trees, plants, and flowers, that were proper for a garden of pleasure. In the upper terrace there was an aqueduct or engine, whereby water was drawn up out of the river, which from thence watered the whole garden.”—*Ibid.*

NOTE L. Page 125.

“ Such a number of guests Ptolemy, king of Egypt, feasted at one time of Pompey’s army, as Pliny, from Varro, relates : but Alexander far exceeded, who, at a wedding, had nine (some say ten) thousand at his tables, and gave to every one a cup of gold, to offer wine in honour of the gods ; and Pliny reports of one Pythius Bythinus, who entertained the whole army of Xerxes with a feast, even seven hundred and eighty-eight thousand men.”—*Dr. Gill, in loco.*

NOTE M. Page 125.

“ Cyrus, when he heard that they were celebrating a festival in Babylon, in which all the Babylonians drank and revelled the whole night ; on that occasion, as soon as it grew dark, took a number of men with him, and opened the ditches into the river.”—*Cyropedia*, B. VII. Chap. V.

NOTE N. Page 128.

“ Not the wife of Belshazzar, as Porphyry would have it ; but rather the queen-mother, as Jacchiades, the widow of Evil-merodach, his father, whose name was Nitocris ; and is spoken of by Herodotus, as a very prudent woman.”—*Dr. Gill, in loco.*

Note O. Page 130.

“ The Chaldee and Syrian tongue was once all one,

as appeareth in Gen. xxxi. 47, &c. In character, indeed, they differed; they, of Babylon, using one kind of letter; they, of Syria, another: this was that, that nonplust the Babylonian wizards about the writing of the wall, so that they could not read it, though it were in their own language, because it was not in their own letter."—*Lightfoot's Works*, Vol. IV. p. 54. See also *Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary, in loco*.

NOTE P. Page 133.

This seventh verse is still more significant, as here interpreted, if we adopt the translation of Bishop Lowth:

“ And he saw a chariot with two riders ;
A rider on an ass, a rider on a camel.”

It is to be observed, that the Persians were accustomed to mules and asses; and that Media abounded with camels.—*See Dr. Gill on Isaiah xxi. 7; and Bishop Lowth's Note, in loco*.

NOTE Q. Page 135.

Cyrus is also foretold in Isaiah xlvi. 11. “ Calling a ravenous bird (or an *eagle*) from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country,” &c. The ensign of Cyrus was a golden eagle. *Cyropedia*, B. VII. Chap. I.

NOTE R. Page 136.

The 4th year of Jehoiakim synchronizes with the year 606, B. C. The first year of Darius, the Mede,

is the same with the year 538, B. C.; so that the space between these two eras is 68 years. Darius reigned two years longer, when, upon his death, he was succeeded by Cyrus, who immediately gave an edict for the emancipation of the Jews; exactly fulfilling the 70 years' captivity. Although I have introduced this prophecy from Jeremiah, as pointing out the doom of Babylon, yet it is to be borne in mind that the *restoration of the Jews* is the main subject of the prediction. It was not that Babylon should fall, when the 70 years were completed; but the first captivity was to cease. At the same time, the prophecy includes both events; because the one was dependant on, and was soon to succeed, the other. The exact period, here mentioned, was also fulfilled, as follows. The temple at Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in the year before Christ, 588; Darius Hystaspes, confirmed the decree of Cyrus, which was given in behalf of the Jews, in the year 518, B. C. $518 + 70 = 588$.— See *Prideaux*.

NOTE S. Page 137.

“ They that were within the walls laughed at this blockade, as being themselves provided with necessities for above twenty years. Cyrus hearing this, divided his army into twelve parts, as if he intended that each part should serve on the watch one month in the year. And when the Babylonians heard this, they laughed yet more than before; thinking with themselves that they were to be watched by the Phrygians, Lydians, Arabians, and Cappadocians, men that were

better affected to them than they were to the Persians.”
—*Cyropedia*. B. VII. Chap. 5.

NOTE T. Page 138.

It has been shewn, under Note M, that Cyrus was acquainted with the festive proceedings within the besieged city. Some critics imagine that this feast was an annual one, held in commemoration of Bel, or some other deity.—*See Wintle*.

NOTE U. Page 138.

“ While these banks were building, the river was turned another way: for which purpose, to the west of Babylon, was made a prodigious artificial lake, which was, according to the lowest computation, forty miles square, and one hundred and sixty in compass; and in depth thirty-five feet, saith Herodotus; seventy-five, saith Megasthenes. The former seems to measure from the surface of the sides, and the other from the top of the banks that were cast up upon them. And into this lake was the whole river turned by an artificial canal cut from the west side of it, till all the said work was finished, and then it was returned again into its own former channel. . . . Berosus, Megasthenes and Abydenus attribute all these works to Nebuchadnezzar; but Herodotus tells us, that the bridge, the river banks, and the lake, were the work of Nitocris, his daughter-in-law. Perhaps Nitocris finished what Nebuchadnezzar had left unperfected at his death.”—*Prideaux*. Anno 570.

NOTE V. Page 139.

“ When the affair of the river was thus managed, Cyrus gave orders to the Persian commanders of thousands, both foot and horse, to attend him. . . . Then making those that attended his person, . . . to go down into the dry part of the river, ordered them to try whether the channel of the river was passable. And when they brought him word that it was passable, . . . he spake to them in this manner: . . . ‘ The river, my friends, has yielded us a passage into the city: let us boldly enter. . . . Now we march to them at a time that many of them are asleep, many drunk, and all of them in confusion. . . . Do you, said he, Gobrias and Gadatas, shew us the ways; for you are acquainted with them, and when we are got in, lead us the readiest way to the palace.’ ‘ It may be no wonder,’ said they that were with Gobrias, ‘ if the doors of the palace are open, for the city seems to-night to be in a general revel.’ ” — *Cyropedia*. B. VII. Chap. 5.

NOTE W. Page 139.

“ As soon as the noise and clamour began, they that were within perceiving the disturbance, and the king commanding them to examine what the matter was, ran out, *throwing open the gates*. They that were with Gadatas, as soon as they saw the gates loose, broke in, pressing forward on the runaways, . . . and they came up to the king, and found him now in a standing posture, with his sword drawn. They mastered him,” &c.—*Ibid*.

Herodotus observes that the Persians might have been enclosed as in a net, whilst in the bed of the river.

NOTE X. Page 140.

“ He (St. Peter) had also gone much further to the east, if the Babylon, from which he wrote the epistle, was the celebrated city on the Euphrates. But it has been supposed by some writers to be a figurative name, by which he chose to speak of Rome.”—*Dr. Burton's History of the Christian Church.* Chap. V.

Lightfoot has devoted an entire Sermon to prove that the Babylon, mentioned by Peter, is to be literally understood. He argues that Babylon contained a great number of Jews, and that, as Peter was the apostle of the circumcision, it is highly probable that he visited that part of the world. The learned Doctor says : “ Babylon here is to be properly taken ; viz. for Babylon, in Chaldea. . . . The word Bosor, in 2 Peter ii. 15, speaks Peter in Babylon. What would they think of it, to whom he wrote, if he wrote from Rome ? but if from Chaldea, it was the idiom of that country,” &c.—*Works.* Vol. VII. Sermon I.

NOTE Y. Page 140.

“ The ordure of wild beasts was so strong, that prudence got the better of curiosity, for we had no doubt as to the savage nature of the inhabitants. Our guides, indeed, told us that all the ruins abounded in lions and other wild beasts.”—*Major Keppel's Narrative, cited in Dr. Keith's interesting Work on Prophecy.*

“ By means of all these changes Babylon became an utter desert, and all the country round fell into the same state of desolation and horror ; so that the most able geographers at this day cannot determine the place where it stood. In this manner God’s prediction was literally fulfilled. (Isa. xiv. 22, 23.) The malediction relates to the whole world : it is the general anathema pronounced against the wicked ; it is the terrible decree, by which the two cities of Babylon and Jerusalem shall be separated for ever, and an eternal divorce be put between the saints and the reprobate. The Scriptures that have foretold it, shall subsist till the day of its execution. The sentence is written therein, and deposited, as it were, in the public archives of religion. ‘ The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass ; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.’ ”—*Rollin’s Ancient History*. Book IV. Chap. I. Art. II.

“ In the taking of Babylon ended the Babylonish Empire, after it had continued from the beginning of the reign of Nabonassar (who first founded it) two hundred and nine years. And here ended the power and pride of this great city, just fifty years after it had destroyed the city and temple of Jerusalem ; and hereby were, in a great measure, accomplished the many prophecies which were by the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Daniel, delivered against it.”—*Prideaux*. Anno 539.

“ There is a fragment of it (the History of the Assyrians by Abydenus) preserved by Eusebius, wherein it is asserted, upon the authority of Megasthenes, that Nebuchadnezzar was divinely inspired, and

prophesied in this manner : ‘ I Nebuchadnezzar, foretel unto you, O Babylonians, an imminent calamity, which neither Belus, my progenitor, nor queen Beltis can persuade the fates to avert.’ A Persian mule shall come, assisted by your demons, and impose servitude upon you ; whose coadjutor shall be a Mede, the boast of the Assyrians.’ And soon after he died, Herodotus, who was a much older historian than Magasthenes, relates, that a Delphic oracle was given to Croesus, king of Lydia, that ‘ when a mule should rule over the Medes, then he should not be ashamed to fly away.’ Which oracle was afterwards thus interpreted by the Pythian priestess : ‘ Cyrus was this mule ; for he was born of parents of different nations, the mother the better, and the father the meaner, for she was a Mede, and the daughter of the king of the Medes, but he was a Persian, and subject to the Medes.’ ”—*Bp. Newton on the Prophecies. Dissert. XIII.*

NOTES TO LECTURE VII.

NOTE A. Page 145.

“ Original sin standeth not in the Following of Adam, (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is the Fault and Corruption of the Nature of every Man, that naturally is engendered of the Offspring of Adam, whereby Man is very far gone from Original Righte-

ousness, and is of his own Nature inclined to Evil, so that the Flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit, and therefore in every Person born into this World it deserveth God's Wrath and Damnation: And this Infection of Nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated, whereby the Lust of the Flesh, called in Greek *φρόνημα σαρκός*, which some do expound the Wisdom, some Sensuality, some the Affection, some the Desire of the Flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no Condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, That Concupiscence and Lust hath of itself the nature of Sin."—*The 9th Article of the Church of England.*

"It is the Holy Ghost, and no other thing, that doth quicken the minds of men, stirring up good, and godly motions in their hearts, which are agreeable to the Will, and Commandment of God, such as otherwise of their owne crooked, and perverse nature they should never have. That which is borne of the Spirit, is Spirit. As who should say: Man of his owne nature is fleshly, and carnall, corrupt, and naught, sinfull, and disobedient to God, without any sparke of goodnesse in him, without any vertuous or godly motion, only given to evill thoughts, and wicked deeds."—*Homily for Whit Sunday. Part 1st. Edition 1640. Page 209.*

"Does a single day ever pass over you without, we will not say one such sinful imagination, but without many such breaking in upon you, and carrying you away captive almost before you are sensible of their attack. If this be the case, and if you have lived twenty,

thirty, or forty years in this world of sin, who can tell the length of that dark scroll written within and without, with guilty thoughts, unprofitable words, and unholy actions, which no eye but God's has seen, and no hand but His has registered?"—*Rev. Henry Blunt's Discourses on the 39 Articles.* Discourse I.

NOTE B. Page 146.

An acquaintance with past history, and a knowledge of the present state of the world, will convince us, if indeed our minds are not so prejudiced as to resist the evidence of the clearest truth, that, even in the minor consideration of intellectual and temporal advantages, the Gospel of Christ is the most invaluable blessing ever conferred upon mankind. If we contemplate the human family in the aggregate, we shall see that the grossest ignorance, superstition, and vices, prevail in those countries where the Bible is either unknown or discarded; even as we may behold a verification of the same truth in the conduct of individuals, the contemners of the Bible being the most exceptionable and reprobate characters. An impartial reference to the annals of every clime will shew that, until the truths of revelation have been accepted, the inhabitants have been either semi-barbarians or totally uncivilized; and invariably also should we find, were we to consult a narrative of each family, that the most unruly and discontented members were those, who were the least influenced by the doctrines of the Bible. It might, perhaps, produce a beneficial effect on the minds of the people, if they would reflect upon the condition of

their forefathers, and revert to some of those scenes practised by the former inhabitants of this fair island. Contrast, with the view of obtaining a practical result, the beautiful description of future happiness, given in the Holy Scriptures, with the following account of heavenly joy held out to a deluded race by the religion of our Danish ancestors:—" Their sacred city is in heaven, under the ash Ydrasil, which is the greatest of all trees, for its roots cover Niflehim, and its branches spread over the whole earth, and reach above the heavens. The way from heaven to earth is by a bridge, which is the rainbow; and at the end of that bridge, Heimdal, the sentinel of the gods, hath his station to watch the giants. He sees an hundred leagues round him by night as well as by day; his hearing is so acute, that he hears the wool grow on the sheep's back; and when he sounds his trumpet, it is heard throughout all worlds. The souls of all who were slain in battle were received in heaven, in the palace of Odin, called Valhalla, which had five hundred and forty gates. There they passed their lives in continual enjoyment, fighting and cutting each other to pieces every morning, then returning whole to dine upon the boar Serimner, who was hunted and eaten every day, and restored to life every night, that he might be ready for the morrow; their drink was ale out of the skulls of their enemies, or mead, which a she-goat produced every day instead of milk, in quantity sufficient to inebriate them all. But this life of perfect enjoyment was not to endure for ever; for mighty as the gods of Valhalla were, they had enemies mighty as themselves, and who were destined to pre-

ail over them at last.”—*Southey's Book of the Church*, chap. v. page 41. Fourth Edition.

How great are the extravagances into which men have been led, in all ages, when unenlightened by the Spirit of God! The above description of heaven meets with a parallel in the portraiture of Paradise, as drawn by the Arabian impostor:—“ They shall repose on couches, the linings whereof shall be of thick silk, interwoven with gold; and the fruit of the two gardens shall be near at hand to gather. Which, therefore, of your Lord's benefits will ye ungratefully deny? Therein shall receive them beauteous damsels, refraining their eyes from beholding any besides their spouses; having complexions like rubies and pearls. Therein shall be agreeable and beauteous damsels, having fine black eyes; and kept in pavilions from public view; which, therefore, of your Lord's benefits will ye ungratefully deny?” &c. &c.—*Sale's Koran*, chap. 55.

For an account of Great Britain, previous to its conversion to Christianity, see Southey's work, above cited, and Hume's History of England, Vol. I.; and for an interesting narrative of the circumstance that induced Pope Gregory to attempt the conversion of our country, and of the happy effects that resulted from the mission of St. Augustine and his godly companions, the reader is referred to a volume, entitled, “ An English-Saxon Homily on The Birth-Day of St. Gregory,” which is well worthy of perusal. The following is the commencement of the passage:—“ It happen'd at some time, as it often doth, that some *English* Merchants brought their Merchandizes to

Rome : And *Gregory* passing along the Street to the *English*-men taking a view of their Goods, he there beheld amongst their Merchandizes Slaves set out to sale. They were white complexion'd, and Men of fair countenance, having noble Heads of Hair. And *Gregory*, when he saw the Beauty of the Young Men, enquired from what Country they were brought, and the Men said from *England* ; and that all the Men in that Nation were as beautiful. Then *Gregory* asked them whether the Men of that Land were Christians, or Heathens ; and the Men said unto him they were Heathens. *Gregory* then fetching a long Sigh from the very bottom of his Heart, said, Alas ! alas ! that Men of so fair a Complexion should be subject to the Prince of Darkness. After that *Gregory* enquired how they call'd the Nation from whence they came. To which he was answer'd, that they were called *Angle* (that is, *English* :) Then said he, rightly they are called *Angle*, because they have the Beauty of Angels, and therefore it is very fit that they should be the Companions of Angels in Heaven. Yet still *Gregory* enquired what the Shire was nam'd from which the Young Men were brought. It was told him that the Men of that Shire were called *Deiri*. *Gregory* answer'd, Well they are called *Deiri*, because they are delivered from Wrath and called to the Mercy of *Christ*. Yet again he enquired what was the Name of the King of their Province ; he was answer'd that the King's Name was *Ælla*. Therefore *Gregory* playing upon the Words in allusion to the Name, said, it is fit that Hallelujah be sung in that Land in praise of the Almighty Creator."—Page 11.

NOTE C. Page 147.

The following quotations from the accredited formularies of our truly scriptural and apostolic branch of the Church of Christ, will clearly shew how perfectly consistent with her doctrines are the sentiments here expressed. It is not possible that we can form *too low* an estimate of ourselves. We are, indeed, utterly dependant upon the free and sovereign grace of our heavenly Father for every good thought which we conceive, not to say for every pious action we perform. “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.”—(Psalm cxv. 1.)

“The condition of man, after the fall of Adam, is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.”—*Articles of the Church of England*, Art X. Of Free Will.

“Q. Dost thou think that this faith is a quality of nature, or the gift of God?”

“A. Faith is the gift of God, and a singular and excellent gift. For both our wits are too gross and dull to conceive and understand the wisdom of God, whose fountains are opened by faith, and our hearts are more apt either to distrust, or to wrongful and corrupt trust in ourselves, or in other creatures, than to true

trust in God. But God instructing us with his Word and lightening our minds with his Holy Spirit, maketh us apt to learn those things that otherwise would be far from entering into the dull capacity of our wits; and sealing the promises of salvation on our souls, he so informeth us that we are most surely persuaded of the truth of them. These things the apostles understanding, do pray to the Lord to increase their faith."—*Nowell's Catechism*, page 76. Cited in the Rev. Wm. Wilson's 39 Articles Illustrated.

"The Holy Ghost, in writing the Holy Scripture, is nothing more diligent than to pull down man's vain glory, and pride, which of all vices is most universally grafted in all mankind, even from the first infection of our first father Adam. And therefore we read in many places of Scripture, many notable lessons against this old rooted vice, to teach us the most commendable vertue of humility, how to know ourselves, and to remember what we be of our selves. In the book of Genesis, (Gen. 3.) Almighty God giveth us all a title, and name in our great grandfather Adam, which ought to warne us all to consider what we be, whereof we be, from whence we came, and whither we shall, saying thus, In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eate thy bread, till thou be turned againe into the ground: for out of it wast thou taken, in as much as thou art dust, into dust shalt thou be turned againe. Here (as it were in a glasse) we may learne to know our selves to be but ground, earth, and ashes, and that to earth and ashes we shall returne."—*Homily on the Misery of Mankind*. First Part.

NOTE D. Page 150.

“ The great plan and benevolent design of this dispensation is plainly this : to enlighten the minds, purify the religion, and amend the morals of mankind in general. Was this universally accepted, and did every man observe strictly every precept of the gospel, the face of human affairs, and the economy of the world would, indeed, be greatly changed ; but surely they would be changed for the better ; and we should enjoy much more happiness, even here, than at present : for we must not forget that evils are by it forbid as well as resistance ; injuries, as well as revenge ; all unwillingness to diffuse the enjoyments of life, as well as solicitude to acquire them : all obstacles to ambition, as well as ambition itself ; and therefore, all contentions for power and interest would be at an end ; and the world would go on much more happily than it now does.”—*A View of the internal Evidence of the Christian Religion, by Soame Jenyns, Esq. Works. Vol. IV. page 90. Second Edition.*

NOTE E. Page 152.

“ I do not think that this is to be understood so as to imply that whatever laws or ordinances the Medes or Persians once enacted, they never changed them. This would argue extreme folly in legislators in any country. Nothing more appears to be meant than that the decree should be enacted, written, and registered, according to the legal forms among the Medes and

Persians ; and this one to be made absolute for *thirty* days. The laws were such among this people, that, when once passed with the usual formalities, the *king* could not change them at his own will. This is the utmost that can be meant by the law of the Medes and Persians that could not be changed.”—*Dr. Adam Clarke, in loco.*

NOTE F. Page 155.

“ ‘ Daniel prayed three times a day :’ that is, say R. Saadiah and R. Solomon, ‘ morning, evening, and at the minchah.’ And ‘ evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray ;’ R. Solomon. ‘ Evening, morning, and at minchah, the three times of prayer.’ Now this ‘ minchah’ time is described by their doctors thus : ‘ Minchah gedolah is the beginning of the time of the daily sacrifice between the two evenings, when the sun begins to decline ; which is from the sixth hour and forward until night.’ ”—*Lightfoot, Vol. VIII. page 215.*

The prophet turning in a particular direction whilst in the attitude of prayer, reminds us of the custom of the early Christians, practised by a few in our own times, of kneeling towards the east when engaged in devotion. Tertullian, rebutting a charge of worshipping the sun brought against the Christians in his day, observes, “ This suspicion, however, hath arisen from our well known custom of turning towards the east when we pray.”—*Apology, Chap. 16.*

“ Augustin (*De Sermone Domini, Lib. II. c. 5.*) refers to the same custom ; *Quum ad orationes stamus*

ad orientem convertimur, unde cœlum surgit: non tanquam ibi sit Deus, et quasi cæteras mundi partes deseruerit, qui ubique præsens non locorum spatiis sed maiestate potentiæ; sed ut admoneatur animus ad naturam excellentiorem se convertere, id est, ad Dominum.

“ Many other reasons, which might have led to this observance, are adduced from various early authorities, by Bingham, *Eccles. Ant.* Book XIII. c. 8, 15. Bingham is inclined to think that it arose from a ceremony in baptism, in which the convert, in renouncing the devil, turned his face to the west, as the region of darkness, and, in declaring his faith in Christ, turned to the east. Book XI. c. 7, 4. This, however, seems to have been rather a particular instance of the general custom, than its origin.

“ The same veneration for the east caused churches to be usually built, in very early times, with the principal entrance to the west, and the altar towards the east. Tertullian seems to allude to this position of places of worship, as well as to the attitude of the worshippers, *Advers. Valent.* c. 3. *Nostræ columbæ etiam domus simplex, in editis semper et apertis, et ad lucem. Amat figura Spiritus sancti Orientem, Christi figuram.*

“ The few exceptions to this position of the churches, which are occasionally found, shew only that the custom was not general. There is one remarkable instance in the splendid church erected at Tyre, by Paulinus, the Bishop, at the beginning of the fourth century. The entrance of that magnificent edifice was to the east, and the altar in the centre. (Eusebius, *H. E.* x. 14. pp. 311 D. 312 B.) Socrates

(H. E. v. 22. p. 235 D.) mentions, that the church at Antioch, in Syria, was placed in a direction opposite to that which was usual, having the altar towards the west instead of the east."—*Mr. Chevallier's Note on the above passage of Tertullian.*

The passage from the works of Austin shews that the ancient custom of turning to the east in prayer was not without a *signification*: "When we pray, we turn towards the east," (this quarter of the globe, whence the sun has its apparent rise, being typical of Christ, the "Sun of Righteousness") "not as though God were there, and as if he had deserted other parts of the world *but in order that the soul may be admonished to turn itself towards a more excellent nature, that is, towards the Lord.*" Many ceremonies, connected with our church, are depreciated, because their import is not understood. *Ignorance* has made enthusiastical religionists, who, in the plenitude of their zeal, have contended for the abolition of customs which are truly valuable, not merely on account of their antiquity, but because they are highly significant of the sublimest truths. This is not the place to enter more diffusively into the importance of this question; but the circumstance of Daniel turning in a particular direction whilst preferring his supplications to God, afforded me the opportunity (which I do not wish to lose) of protesting against that spirit of *ultra-protestantism*, which, should it ever prevail over more solid and judicious sentiments, will prove subversive of true piety and happiness. The blessings enjoyed by our country through the failure of the strenuous efforts of the

Puritans, so admirably checked by the sound and determined conduct of James the First, are incalculably great, although they have been so little valued, even by those who have participated largely in the benefit. It should be remembered that there is a vast difference between embracing any of the unscriptural dogmas, or practising any of the various abominations of the church of Rome, and preserving in the mode of our worship "decency and order," together with a regard for certain forms or gestures emblematical of godly doctrines. The church of England, if her formularies were strictly followed, if they were understood and appreciated, would guide her members clear of every danger, avoiding Scylla as well as Charibdis, maintaining for them a course equi-distant from the fatal errors of Popery, and from the uncertain tenets of Sectarianism.

In a Sermon published by Dr. Hook, entitled, "A Call to Union on the Principles of the English Reformation," will be found some valuable matter bearing upon the subject here broached; and the copious Notes accompanying the Discourse, will repay the reader, even though, like myself, he may not assent to every opinion which is there expressed. "Southey's Book of the Church" may be perused with considerable profit.

NOTE G. Page 158.

"After Nero and Domitian, we have also been informed, that in the reign of the emperor, (Trajan) whose times we are now recording, there was a partial persecution excited throughout the cities, in conse-

quence of a popular insurrection. In this we have understood, also, that Simeon died as a martyr, who, we have shewn, was appointed the second bishop of the church at Jerusalem. To this the same Hegessippus bears testimony, whose words we have already so often quoted. This author, speaking of certain heretics, superadds, that Simeon, indeed, about this time, having borne the accusation of Christian, although he was tortured for several days, and astonished both the judge and his attendants in the highest degree, terminated his life with sufferings like those of our Lord. But it is best to hear the writer himself, who gives the account as follows : ‘ Of these heretics,’ says he, ‘ some reported Simeon the son of Cleophas, as a descendant of David, and a Christian : and thus he suffered as a martyr, when he was an hundred and twenty years old, in the reign of the emperor Trajan, and the presidency of the consular Atticus.’ The same author says, that as search was made for the Jews that were of the tribe of David, his accusers, as if they were descended from this family, were taken in custody. One might reasonably assert that this Simeon was among the witnesses that bore testimony to what they had both heard and seen of our Lord, if we are to judge by the length of his life, and the fact that the gospels make mention of Mary, the daughter of Cleophas, whose son Simeon was, as we have already shewn. But the same historian says, that there were others, the offspring of one of those considered brothers of the Lord, whose name was Judas, and that these lived until the same reign after their profession of Christ, and the testimony under Domitian before mentioned. He writes thus : ‘ There are also those that take the lead

of the whole church as martyrs, even the kindred of our Lord; and when profound peace was established throughout the church, they continued to the days of the emperor Trajan, until the time that the above-mentioned Simeon, the relative of our Lord, being the son of Cleophas, was waylaid by the heretics, and also himself accused for the same cause, under Atticus, who was of similar dignity. After he was tormented many days, he died a martyr, with such firmness, that all were amazed, even the president himself, that a man of a hundred and twenty years should bear such tortures. He was at last ordered to be crucified.”—*Eusebius's Ecclesiastical History*, Book III. Chap. XXXII. Translated by the Rev. C. F. Cruse, of the University of Pennsylvania.

NOTE H. Page 159.

“After this, in the ninth year of his empire, Trajan, elated with his victory over the Scythians and Dacians, and many other nations, conceived that the religious company of Christians was yet wanting to complete his universal dominion. He therefore threatened them with persecution, unless they chose to submit to the worship of devils, with all other nations; so that terror compelled all men of godly lives either to sacrifice or to die. Then, therefore, this noble soldier of Christ, (Ignatius,) apprehensive for the church of Antioch, was voluntarily brought before Trajan, who was at that time passing through the city, as he was hastening against Armenia and the Parthians. As soon, then, as he stood in the presence of the emperor Trajan, the emperor said, ‘Who art thou, unhappy and deluded

man, who art so active in transgressing our commands, and besides, persuadest others to their own destruction?' Ignatius replied, 'No one ought to call (one who is properly styled) Theophorus, unhappy and deluded; for the evil spirits, (which delude men) are departed far from the servants of God. But if you so call me, because I am a trouble to those evil spirits, and an enemy to their delusions, I confess the justice of the appellation. For having (within me) Christ, the Heavenly King, I loosen all their snares.' Trajan replied, 'And who is Theophorus?' Ignatius answered, 'He that hath Christ in his heart.' Then, said Trajan, 'Thinkest thou, therefore, that we have not the gods within us, who also assist us in our battles against our enemies?' 'Thou dost err,' Ignatius replied, 'in calling the evil spirits of the heathen gods. For there is but one God, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that are in them: and one Christ Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God, whose kingdom may I enjoy.' Trajan said, 'Speakest thou of him who was crucified under Pontius Pilate?' Ignatius answered, '(I speak of) him who hath crucified my sin, with the inventor of it, and hath put all the deceit and malice of the devil under the feet of those who carry him in their hearts.' Then, asked Trajan, 'Carriest thou, then, within thee, him who was crucified?' 'Yea,' replied Ignatius, 'for it is written, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.' Then Trajan pronounced this sentence: 'We decree that Ignatius, who hath confessed that he carries about within himself him that was crucified, shall be carried in bonds by soldiers to the great Rome, there to be thrown to the beasts for the gratification of

the people. When the holy martyr heard this sentence, he cried out with joy, 'I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast vouchsafed thus to punish me, out of thy perfect love towards me, and hast made me to be put in iron bonds, with thine apostle Paul.' Having thus spoken, he joyfully suffered his bonds to be put about him; and having first prayed for the church, and commended it with tears unto the Lord, like a choice ram, the leader of a goodly flock, he was hurried away by the brutal and cruel soldiers, to be carried to Rome, and there to be devoured by blood-thirsty wild beasts."

Ignatius having arrived at Rome, the account of his martyrdom is thus continued, "All the brethren kneeling down, he prayed to the Son of God for the church, that he would cause the persecution to cease, and (continue) the love of the brethren towards each other. (This being done,) he was hurried away with all haste into the amphitheatre, and was immediately thrown in, according to the previous command of Cæsar, the end of the spectacles being at hand. For it was then a very solemn day, called in the Roman tongue the thirteenth (of the calends of January,) upon which the people were more than ordinarily wont to be gathered together. Thus was he delivered to the wild beasts, near the temple, that so the desire of the holy martyr, Ignatius, might be accomplished, as it is written, the desire of the righteous is acceptable; namely, that he might be burdensome to none of the brethren, by the gathering of his remains, according, as in his epistle he had before wished, that so his end might be. For only the more solid parts of his holy remains were left, which were carried to Antioch, and wrapped in linen as an inestimable treasure left to the

holy church, by the grace which was in the martyr."—*The Martyrdom of Ignatius*, Chap. 2 and 6.

A faithful account of Ignatius will be found in the works of the Rev. John Gambold, M.A. late one of the bishops of the Unitas Fratrum, where also the martyrdom is related, in a very interesting way, under the form of a drama. The precise date of the martyrdom is doubtful. The narrative, from which the above is extracted, and which was written by eye-witnesses, assigns the ninth year of Trajan, corresponding with the year 107; but Bishop Pearson has fixed a more probable date in a period eight or nine years later. Those who have not the opportunity of reading many books, and who, at the same time, are desirous of becoming acquainted with some of the earliest of the christian fathers, would do well to peruse "Evans's Biography of the Early Church."

NOTE I. Page 161.

Polycarp was a disciple of the evangelist St. John, as we learn from the following passage of Irenæus: "Well, therefore, could I describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat and taught: his going out and coming in; the whole tenour of his life; his personal appearance; the discourses which he made to the people. How would he speak of the conversations which he had held with John, and with others who had seen the Lord."—*See Chevallier's Introduction to his Translation of the Epistles, &c. of some of the Early Christians*, page xxv. The martyrdom of this devoted man occurred in the year 167, say some; and in the year

147, say others. Eusebius mentions the first date, and Bishop Pearson contends for the latter.

The subjoined narrative will be interesting: "The proconsul said unto him, (Polycarp) 'I have wild beasts ready; to those I will cast thee, unless thou repent.' He answered, 'Call for them, then, for we Christians are fixed in our minds, not to change from good to evil. But it will be good for me to be changed from my grievous (sufferings) to their just reward.' The proconsul added, 'Seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, I will cause thee to be devoured with fire, unless thou shalt repent.' Polycarp answered, 'Thou threatenest me with fire, which burns for an hour, and in a little while is extinguished: for thou knowest not the fire of the future judgment, and of that eternal punishment, which is reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt.'

"Having said this, and many other things, (of the like nature,) he was filled with confidence and joy, in-somuch that his very countenance was full of grace, so that not only he was serene and undisturbed at what was spoken to him, but, on the contrary, the Proconsul was astonished, and sent his own herald to proclaim thrice, in the midst of the lists, 'Polycarp hath confessed himself to be a Christian.' When this was proclaimed by the herald, the whole multitude, both of the Gentiles and of the Jews, which dwelt at Smyrna, being full of fury, cried out with a loud voice, 'This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, who hath overthrown our gods, and teaches so many not to sacrifice, nor to pay any worship to the gods.' And so saying, they cried out and desired Philip, the pre-

sident of the spectacles, that he would let loose a lion against Polycarp. But Philip replied that it was not lawful for him to do so, since that kind of spectacle was already over. Then it pleased them to cry out with one consent that Polycarp should be burnt alive. For so it was necessary that the vision should be fulfilled which was made manifest to him by his pillow, when he saw it on fire, as he prayed, and said prophetically to the faithful that were with him, I must be burnt alive.

“ This then was done with greater speed than it was spoken; the whole multitude instantly gathering together wood and faggots out of the work-shops and baths: the Jews especially, according to their custom, with all readiness assisting them in doing it. When the pile was ready, Polycarp, laying aside all his upper garments, and loosing his girdle, endeavoured also to loosen his sandals, which aforetime he was not wont to do; forasmuch as always every one of the faithful, that was about him, contended who should soonest touch his flesh. For he was adorned by his good conversation with all kinds of piety, even before his martyrdom. Immediately then they put upon him the instruments which were prepared for the pile. But when they would also have nailed him to the stake, he said, ‘ Leave me thus; for he who hath given me strength to endure the fire, will also enable me, without your securing me by nails, to remain without moving in the pile.’

“ Wherefore they did not nail him, but bound him (to the stake.) But he, having put his hands behind him, and being bound as a ram, (chosen) out of a

great flock for an offering, and prepared to be a burnt sacrifice acceptable unto God, looked up to heaven, and said, ‘ O Lord God Almighty, the Father of thy well-beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of thee ; the God of angels and powers and of every creature, and (especially) of the whole race of just men, who live in thy presence ; I give thee hearty thanks that thou hast vouchsafed to bring me to this day and to this hour ; that I should have a part in the number of thy martyrs, in the cup of thy Christ, unto the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body, in the incorruption of the Holy Spirit : among which may I be accepted this day before thee, as a fat and acceptable sacrifice, as thou hast before ordained, and declared, and fulfilled, even thou the true God, with whom is no falsehood at all. For this and for all things else, I praise thee, I bless thee, with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, with whom to thee and the Holy Ghost be glory, both now and to all succeeding ages. Amen.’

“ As soon as he had uttered Amen, and finished his prayer, the men appointed for the purpose lighted the fire. And when the flame began to blaze to a very great height, a wonderful sight appeared to us, who were permitted to witness it, and were also spared, to relate to others what had happened. For the flame, making a kind of arch, like the sail of a ship filled with wind, encompassed the body of the martyr, which was in the midst, not as flesh which was burned, but as bread which is baked, or as gold or silver glowing in the furnace. Moreover we perceived as fragrant an

odour, as if it came from frankincense, or some other precious spices.

“ At length, when these wicked men saw that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded the executioner to go near, and pierce him with his sword. Which being accordingly done, there came forth so great a quantity of blood, as extinguished the fire, and raised an admiration among the people, to consider what a difference there is between the infidels and the elect, one of which this admirable martyr Polycarp was, being in our times a truly apostolical and prophetical teacher, and the Bishop of the Catholic Church which is at Smyrna.”—*Martyrdom of Polycarp*. Chapters 11—16.

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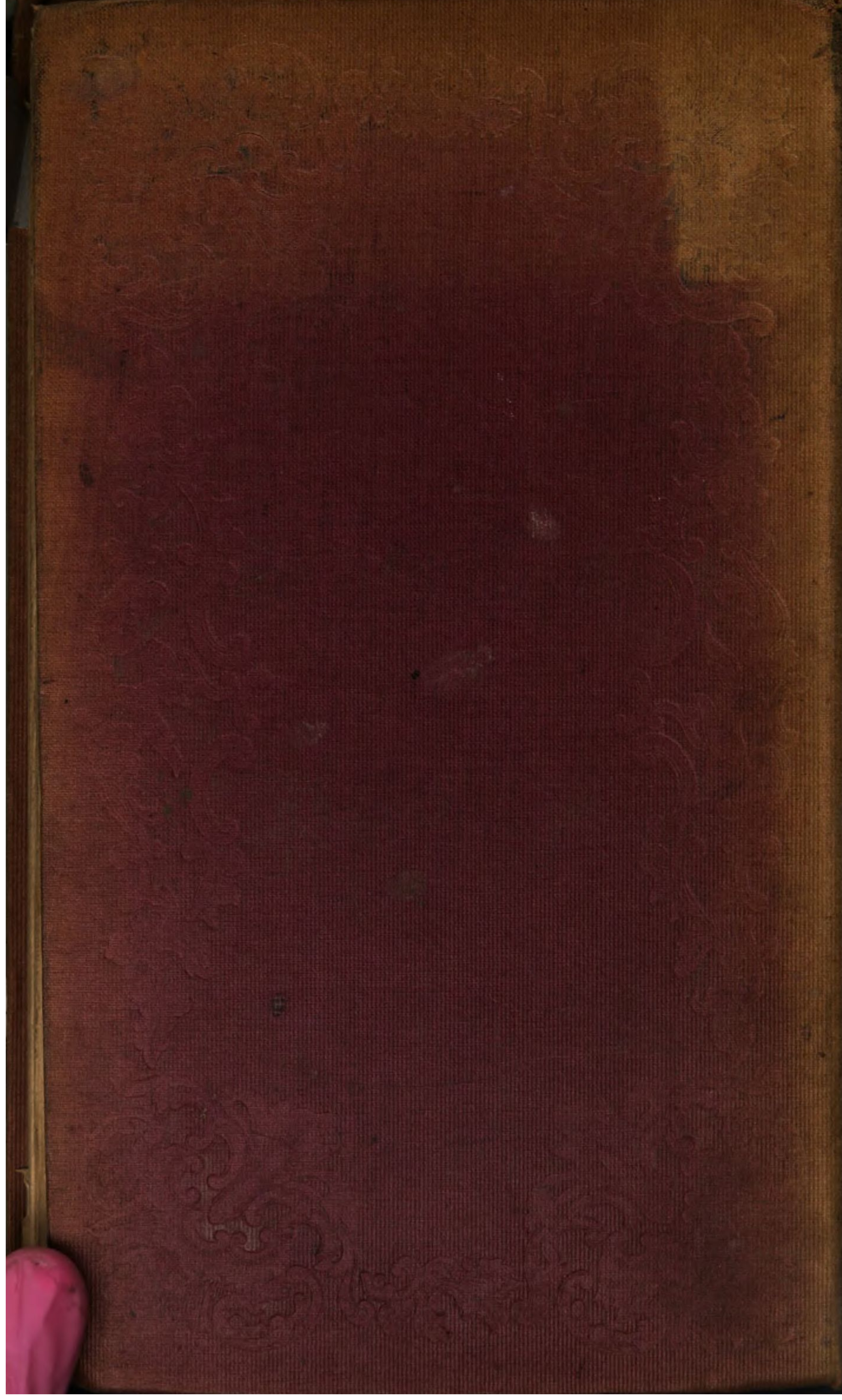














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